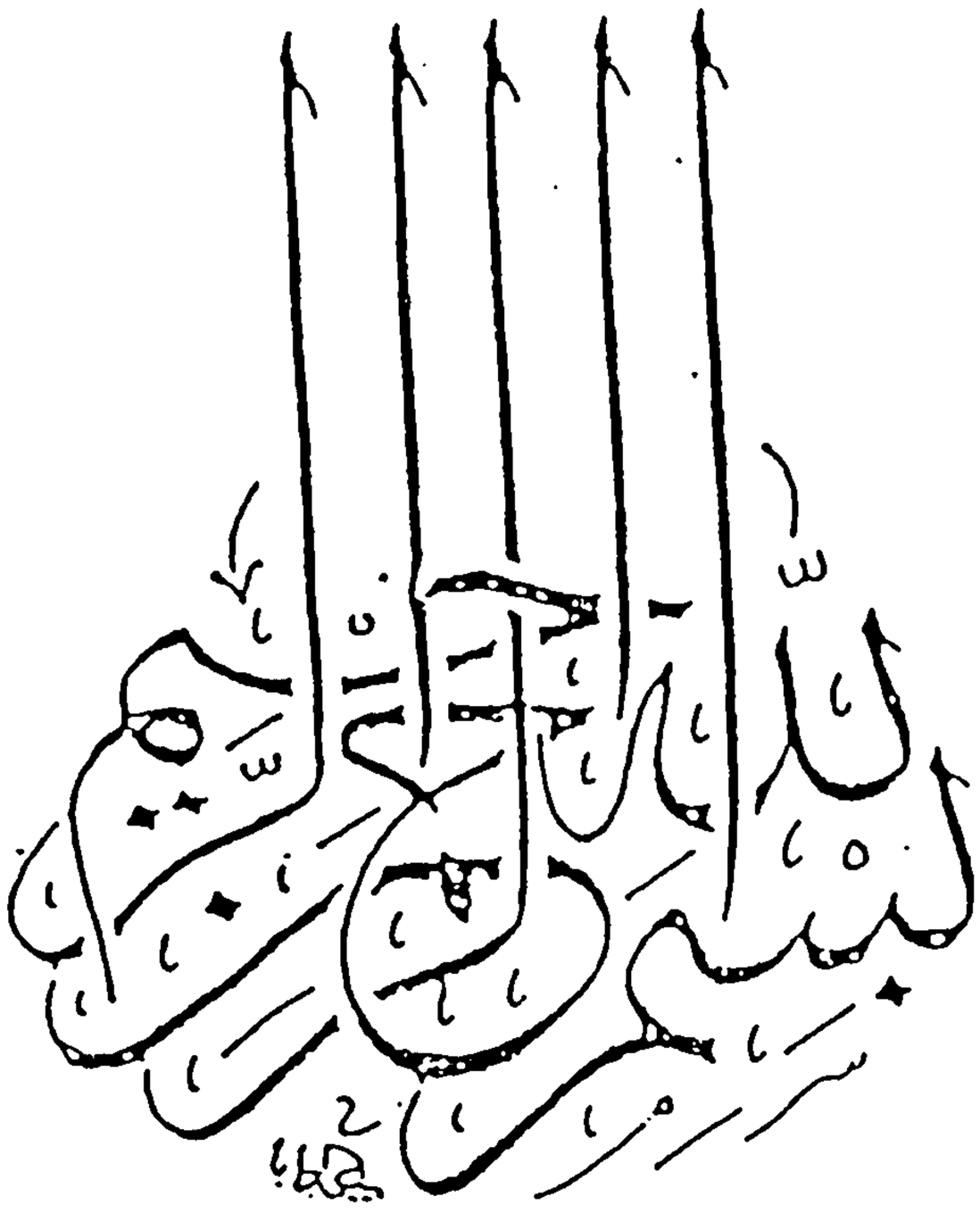

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# FERTILITY PREFERENCES OF THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE WEST BANK

by

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## DEDICATION

To the Palestinian family whose presence in Palestine
is an ongoing struggle.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is designed to explore and examine the various aspects of West Bank couples attitudes, beliefs and childbearing behaviour with regard to family size formation. Within the general framework, the study aims to investigate the various aspects such as household characteristics, marriage issues, determinants of childbearing behaviour, desired family size, ideal family size, gender preference, couples communication with regard to decision making process, and the relation between desired and actual family size. Moreover, this study aims to investigate and examine the effect of socio-economic, cultural and demographic variables on couples preferences and attitudes.

It is believed that in order to understand the couples attitudes, beliefs and behaviour, one should first understand the background which created such attitudes and beliefs. As a result, this study begins with a general overview of the West Bank population. Moreover, this study will shed light on the political situation which has a significant effect on demographic change in the region. In addition, it will examine the influence of Arab culture, being an Islamic one, on:

a) the role of women in the family and society

b) family structure and social system

c) child-parental relationships

d) couples interpersonal relationships

e) couples relations within their family

f) preferred number and gender of children

g) extent of contraceptive use and family planning

The data for the research were gathered by interviewing a sample of 999 couples (husbands and wives) using a questionnaire method. The data were gathered from different environments so as to include urban and rural areas and refugee camps within the district of Nablus.

As for the statistical techniques used for analysing the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSX) was employed. Various statistical measures such as means, correlations, chi-square tests, probabilities and multivariate discriminant analysis were performed in order to examine associations between the various variables.

Some of the outcomes emerging from the analysis include:

1) The political factor has played a major role in shaping the West Bank population from the beginning of this century.

2) On average, West Bank families prefer an early age at marriage for females, while age at marriage for males has increased gradually as a direct result of education.

3) Children's economic contribution to their families is very meager. Thus, the costs and benefits of having children are not considered to be crucial factor in determining West Bank couples childbearing behaviour.

4) On average, husbands have more traditional attitudes towards the number and gender of children than their wives.

On the other hand, wives are more willing to use contraceptives.

5) West Bank couples, especially husbands, have a strong male preference, especially for the first child.

6) In general, the average ideal family size is less than the average desired family size and total fertility rate.

7) With respect to desired family size, an "after the event" rationalisation effect is evident, especially among couples who have completed their family size.

8) A couples relationship and level of communication with each other have a significant effect on decision making with regard to family size preference and contraceptive use.

9) The findings reveal significant differences in couples attitudes towards fertility preference. Variables such as place of residence, age, educational level and women's employment appeared to have the largest discriminant power in explaining couples attitudes to fertility preferences.

Apart from these major findings, the study also includes suggestions and recommendations for future research.

# CHAPTER 1

## FERTILITY PREFERENCES: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 1.1 Introduction

Individual perceptions, motivations and decision-making processes concerning fertility preferences have been the subject of an increasing number of investigations. One reason for this has been the realisation of the importance of the subject in explaining fertility behaviour in developing countries. In turn explanation of fertility behaviour has come to be seen as a critical prerequisite to introducing effective family planning programmes. Greater use of fertility regulation has promoted a closer association between fertility preferences and actual behaviour, thus reducing the gap between couples' attitudes and preferences on the one hand and actual family size on the other. Therefore, personal desires may have become an important factor in shaping future trends in fertility.

This chapter aims to discuss some theoretical issues relating to fertility behaviour. It aims to investigate the concept of fertility preference, and to review relevant literature with regard to fertility behaviour in developing countries. The structure of this chapter is as follows: It begins with a discussion of the main components that determine fertility behaviour. This discussion will be followed by an investigation of the concept of desired family size as a measure of demand for children. This

chapter will also investigate the major factors and circumstances that determine and influence couples' preferences with regard to issues such as decision-making on family size and child gender preference. Lastly this chapter aims to discuss the effect of socio-economic variables on couples' desires. These variables include family income, education and female employment.

## 1.2 Disciplinary perspectives on fertility

Demography may be broadly defined as the statistical description and analysis of population. More specifically, it is a discipline that aims at ascertaining the number, structure and distribution of people in a given area, and examining the process that produces change in population size and character over time. In order to do this it is necessary to study the age and sex composition of a population, birth and death rates and the mathematical relationships which exist between the demographic processes operating within the population.

Fertility analysis forms only one part, albeit a major one, of demography. Fertility and population growth are such major elements in the process that they would excite scholarly interest even if the policy implications of fertility were obscure (Farooq and Simmons, 1985). Given the applied nature of fertility studies relative to development planning, it has not only been demographers but also population geographers, social statisticians, sociologists, economists and planners who have devoted

attention to the topic. Fertility studies have therefore been informed by expertise from a wide range of disciplines (Wrong, 1968).

Population study and fertility analysis in particular is unavoidably an interdisciplinary field. As Hauser and Duncan (1959) have asserted, it is not and can not be understanding within a single theoretical framework. For example, Kingsley Davis (1949) indicated that fertility behaviour is to a great extent socially determined relating to familial and social norms. Davis argues that whenever a demographer pushes his inquiry to the point of asking why demographic processes take the form that they do, the answer is found in the social field.

Economists on the other hand have analysed fertility from another different and have often treated children as comparable to commodities (Becker, 1960; Schultz, 1973). Other economists have taken into consideration the decision making process (Leibenstein, 1974; Easterlin, 1983) and the economics of family decisions.

Anthropologists analysing fertility change have emphasised the cultural point of view and have suggested that greater attention should be paid to cultural factors and their influences in producing a fertility transition.

The contribution of geographers in fertility studies are relatively few, by contrast with their involvement in other aspects of population geography (Coward, 1986). By tradition geographers have made their greatest contributions in the study of:-

1. The relationship between population and the environment in which they live.
2. The changing spatial pattern of population distribution and movements.
3. Problems of population growth and its impact on human society, the environment and the world's resources (Woods, 1986).

One reason for the small contribution by geographers to fertility studies has simply been the lack of detailed spatial data sets, especially in the developing countries. It might have been expected, however, that the contributions of geographers might have been more substantial following the publication of the results of the world fertility survey in the 1970s and 1980s (Woods, 1986).

## 1.3 Theoretical issues

### 1.3.1 Development and fertility

The relationship between population growth and socio economic development are exceedingly complex. In recent decades life expectancy has improved in most countries as have per capita income, literacy rates and the proportion of population receiving adequate levels of formal education. The precise inter-relationship between these variables is, however, hard to establish.

Inkeles (1969) has argued that the development process was expected to result in a shift in people's attitudes to family size and fertility control. This would occur as a result of changing access to education,

increased urbanisation and increased awareness and availability of health and medical institutions. These effects are ordered by changing social structures involving:-

1. The increasing independence of couples from the authority of their relatives and in particular from parental authority.
2. A growing belief in the ability, via scientific and medical knowledge, of means of controlling fertility behaviour, rather than simply viewing childbearing as determined by fate.
3. Greater openness to new ideas such as family planning.
4. Increased aspirations by couples concerning their future and that of their children.

Some of these links between the developmental process and the determinants of fertility behaviour have been explored by (Easterlin, 1975; 1983).

In some cases, social developments have not kept pace with or corresponded to economic developments. For example, Tabbarah (1982) has shown that the nature of Arab development created a major gap between the social and economic indicators of development in the region. "Oil wealth" in many Arab states resulted in the Gross National Product per capita of these states increasing dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s. There was, however, no equivalent social development. While capital was available to improve medical facilities (and thus to help bring down death

rates), social attitudes towards fertility did not change at the same pace. As a result most of the Arab world experienced very rapid population growth (from the high birth rates and low death rates). In addition, the failure of fertility rates to decline was difficult to explain in terms of existing demographic theories, given the gap between Arab rates and those in other countries with similar levels of GNP per capita (Fargues, 1989).

### 1.3.2 Family planning and development

The international population conference held in Mexico in 1984 emphasised the importance of socio economic development as a pre-requisite to the reduction of levels of population growth (Gould and Lawntin, 1986). This was in marked contrast with the earlier perception of the links between family planning and development (for example, the views expressed at the Bucharest population conference of 1974). Thus in the 1980s there was a shift in emphasis with the success of family planning having been seen as a consequence rather than a determinant of development.

It is important, therefore, to recognise from the outset that there is no such thing as a blueprint for family planning. Policies on family planning need to be sensitive not only to cltural variations in attitudes to fertility behaviour, but also to be attuned to the level of socio-economic development of a sociey at a particular point in time. Tabbarah (1971) for example has suggested that there are at least four stages in a society's development of attitudes to fertility behaviour and family

planning. The first stage is where the desire for children is relatively high because of prevailing social and economic conditions and where the maximum attainable number of children is relatively low as a result of both high child mortality and the low fecundity of women as a result of the poor levels of nutrition and health care. At this stage a large proportion of couples are unable to attain their desired family size. Therefore, couples often express their desired family size in terms of "as many as possible". At this stage public knowledge of methods of fertility regulation is rather limited.

In the second stage the desired number of children remains large and comes closer to the actual number. This change reflects the improved health of both parents (higher fecundity) and children (decline in child mortality rate). Couples can attain their reproductive goals with a proportion exceeding their desired family size.

In the third stage the desired number of children begins to drop below the levels attainable under conditions of natural fertility, because of the large number of couples recognising the need for some level of fertility control. During this stage, however, lags in the decline of fertility tend to appear because of the lack of awareness or access to family planning programmes and inadequate knowledge of the use of contraceptive measures.

The fourth stage is characterised by the position of more developed countries, where the desired number of

children is relatively low and easy to achieve, because of a matching of abilities to control fertility with the desire to have relatively few children.

It is important to note that the population of any given country at a given point cannot always be easily classified as belonging to one of the four aforementioned stages of demographic development, since a political state may be made of several different population units at different stages of development.

The main point in reviewing Tabbarah's (1971) model here is simply to illustrate the changing relationship which should exist between family planning programmes and levels of development. Family planning only becomes of relevance in demographic development once society as a whole has reached certain levels of awareness and has set itself certain goals. As socio-economic development progresses, as the 1984 Mexico Conference has emphasised, the demand for fertility reduction will occur. At this stage family planning programmes have a major role in facilitating the transitional phase (Tabbarah's stage 3) as societies move towards a lower fertility regime.

1.3.1 Theories of fertility change

1.3.3.1 Transition theory: Throughout human history high fertility has been the rule in almost all societies. Fertility began to fall, in some western countries, during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In this century the decline in mortality has spread throughout Europe to most countries. This increased the gap between fertility

and mortality levels and caused rapid population growth in the developing countries (Freedman, 1961; Caldwell, 1967).

The decline in fertility has been extensively classified, categorised and analysed. Thompson (1929) described the combined mortality and fertility decline as a demographic transition. Transition theory generalised the historical pattern of population growth in Western Countries, assuming that all countries would follow this same pattern.

Notestein (1945) classified the transition into three phases: the first phase was characterised by high levels of fertility and mortality rates (pre-transitional societies). Such societies are prevented from disappearing only by social and religious norms which give great emphasis to the virtue of high fertility. Davis and Blake (1956) argued that individuals had little interest in reducing fertility because family structure makes children more valuable to the extended family.

In contemporary industrial countries (developed countries) fertility and mortality rates are both low, representing Notestein's third phase. In between is the demographic transition (phase 2), where mortality decline is not accompanied by a reduction in fertility levels (Demeny, 1974; Notestein, 1945; Coale, 1973). Some researchers have expanded the transition theory to five phases (Blacker, 1947).

Transition theory, although popular amongst

demographers as a descriptive model, has been strongly criticised for a variety of reasons.

1. It was developed in order to explain fertility trends in societies with low fertility rather than to demonstrate other factors causing fertility decline.
2. It lacks explanatory power in relation to the mechanisms producing changes in fertility and therefore is a poor basis for making predictions.
3. It ignores the interactions between demography and social change (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978), since it considers fertility behaviour as economically rational in the industrial world but not in pre-industrial societies. Sahlins (1974) has claimed that fertility in pre-industrial societies is socially rational, since these societies are characterised by social rather than economic priorities.

1.3.3.2 Economic theories of fertility change

Economists have an interest in the relationship between population growth and economic transformations. Review of the macro-economic analysis of population often commences with the work undertaken by Malthus 200 years ago. Malthus assumed that the major determinant of fertility was the age at marriage. When the economic conditions of young people were favourable, he believed that they would marry relatively early, while when the economic conditions were less advantageous the age at marriage would rise and fertility would decline. Thus, Malthus concluded that there should be a positive

relationship between family size and income and the only hope of reducing population growth on a voluntary basis was for a "voluntary" delay of marriage (Simmons, 1985). Malthus also argued that man's capacity to increase his means of subsistence was much less than his capacity to multiply; he suggests that the human population could increase on a geometrical progression whereas the means of subsistance only increased arithmetically.

Many academics have subsequently examined Malthus' idea, especially with reference to periods of population crisis, such as have been experienced recently in the Sahel where some have attempted to relate situations of human disaster to the Malthusian "traps" of vice, war and misery (Woods, 1989). Historical experience has not, however, been generally compatible with Malthusian logic. Famine for example has been shown to be much more of a poverty problem than a population problem (Jowett, 1987). Certainly Malthus' predictions for the English population of the 18th century were ill-founded. Rising living standards associated with the industrial revolution did not lead to a sustained rise in average family size, as Malthusian logic would have predicted, but to quite the inverse situation. Childbearing decisions appear, in a situation of sustained economic growth, to have been related to other social and economic decisions by couples regarding their household economy and lifestyle.

Most recent economic work on fertility change is

derived from studies by Leibenstein (1974) and Becker (1960) who applied economic theories of consumer behaviour to childbearing decisions. The theory of consumer behaviour views the individual as trying to maximise satisfaction given a range of commodities, prices and personal tastes. In this context, children are considered as a special kind of commodity, and fertility is interpreted as a response to consumer demand for children relative to other goods.

Economic theory of this kind has its limitations, especially in developing countries where the concept of desired family size and decision making are ill formed and the correlation between desired and actual family size is not strong (Easterlin, 1980). Economic theory can also be criticised since the concept of taste is often treated as a constant variable. In practice this concept is still ambiguous and needs more detailed exploration. Economic theory clearly shows that variations in desired family size is not only a reflection of income, but of many economic and non-economic variables.

1.3.3.1 Caldwell's theory

Caldwell (1967) has attempted to explain fertility change in relation to changes in family structure and the family system. Caldwell and Caldwell (1977) assumed that fertility is high in some regions because of the social context which makes high fertility socially and economically advantageous. They argued therefore that the chief decision makers not only see social advantage but

also economic advantage in high fertility.

Caldwell adopted the approach of wealth flow theory, in order to investigate this in more detail. This assumed that fertility behaviour was economically rational in all societies in terms of the perceived economic ends of that society. Fertility will change only if those in control of decision making find it advantageous to them (Caldwell, 1967). The wealth flows between children and their parents and vice-versa is considered the main mechanism of fertilty change (Caldwell, 1982). In societies with stable high fertility, the economic advantage derived from high fertility is explained by a net flow of "wealth" over a life time from the younger generation to the older one. The term "wealth" covers a wider range of economic, social, psychological and political issues. For instance, it includes productive labour, security in old age, and all kinds of services, potential help, gifts, remittances, physical protection and political support. On the formation of the nuclear family Caldwell shifts the analysis from the study of external influences to interactions inside the family. Some of Caldwell's assumptions may never be completely proved and need careful testing. Nevertheless his ideas are useful and should be accepted as a basis for further theoretical development, as well as provide a yardstick against which field research results can be measured (Maani, 1990).

From the discussion which has been presented above of

the different approaches which have been adapted to the analysis of fertility change, it is clear that there is a need for further research in order to understand fertility behaviour and the factors lying behind fertility change. By studying parents preferences and their attitudes to fertility behaviour in relation to social, economic and cultural dimensions, this thesis hopes to advance the explanation of fertility change in developing countries.

## 1.4 Determinants of fertility behaviour

Fertility behaviour is viewed as a function of the interaction of three main components:

1. The "demand" for children, refers to the number of surviving children which couples would like to have through their reproductive span.
2. The "natural supply" of children (potential output) or natural fertility level (Henry, 1961) refers to the number of surviving children a couple would have if they did not deliberately limit fertility.
3. Fertility regulation refers to the mechanisms used to control the relationships between "natural supply" and "demand".

Parents tend to make decisions about their desire for further children in relation to the number of surviving children rather than in relation to the total number of births.

In pre-transition societies it is commonly assumed that fertility regulation was absent, and that the demand for children was unlimited. If this was the case,

fertility levels could only be determined by natural fertility (in other words by natural supply factors). Bongaarts and Menken (1983) argued that most of the world's population experienced natural fertility regimes before the onset of the fertility transition. Therefore, it is not surprising that in some traditional societies, the number of surviving children is close to the levels under conditions of natural fertility (Bongaarts, 1978).

Natural fertility and the probability of children surviving have a direct effect on fertility levels. Natural fertility as defined by Davis and Blake (1956) is a function of a set of both behavioural and biological intermediate variables that include post-partum infecundibility, waiting time for conception, intra uterinate mortality, permanent sterility and age at marriage. In most developing counries, there is a lack of adequate and reliable data on the intermediate variables, especially the biological ones, because of the sensitivity of respondents to answering questions on these topics. Therefore, the effect of these variables, in most cases, has to be estimated indirectly (see Bongaarts and Menken, 1983).

Socio-economic characteristics and structure, cultural norms and environmental conditions work together to indirectly influence fertility levels through their direct effect of the intermediate of "proximate" variables. For example, women's education and work has a direct effect

on breast feeding and age at marriage. They ultimately influence natural fertility by reducing the chances of pregnancy (Hoffman, 1975). Many studies have found negative relationships between breast feeding and education, urbanisation, women's work and household income (Butz and Davanzo, 1981; Jain et al., 1970). On the other hand, child survival varies with mother's age, parity, income, health awareness, disease levels and nutritional standards within the society.

Demand for children remains the central issue in explaining fertility changes. For demand to have some effect on fertility, couples must have some means for making their preferences more effective and avoiding unwanted children by using efficient contraceptives. Changing demand has been considered as the key factor in shifting fertility from high to low levels (the fertility transition).

Infant and child mortality has some influence on future demand for surviving children, e.g. several studies show that losing one child may lead couples to desire additional births. The desire may also be influenced by the sex and birth order of the child who has died (Heer, 1983). The reduction of child mortality levels is therefore a major aspect of the demographic transition.

Beside the demand for children (total number), couples desires may be affected by their gender preferences, their views on spacing between births and the level of education, which they desire for their children

(Dhindsa, 1986). For instance couples may prefer to have more children than their stated desired number if they are unsatisfied with the gender of their children.

Demand for children may be influenced by the direct costs involved and by the perceived benefits of children. The evaluation of costs and benefits differ from one society to another, or even within a given society, depending on socio-economic structures, cultural variables and individual characteristics. Caldwell (1983) has argued that the value of children in the early part of the transition is quite different from their subsequent value.

The values of having children are not easily measured because they are a direct result of the complex interactions of a large number of social, economic, cultural and psychological factors (Meade and Singh, 1973). Child costs and benefits (net value) involve social as well as economic criteria, since economic ends cannot be divorced from social ends (Caldwell, 1983). It is not surprising that numerous different approaches and methods have been proposed to measure the value of children (e.g. Westoff, 1981; Simmons, 1971; Caldwell, 1983).

Mueller (1976) attempted to examine fertility differences in relation to childrens costs and benefits in Botswana has found that children cost much more than they contribute to their family's income, even in rural areas. Caldwell (1982) has criticised her findings and her approach which build on economic considerations only.

Motivations to have large families include the desire to increase family labour, concern about security in old age and about continuity of the family name, the role of children in strengthening a couple's relationship and significantly the personal satisfaction felt from having children (Meade and Singh, 1973). Motivations vary quite considerably according to socio-economic developmental level, social class and cultural background (Arnold et al., 1975; Bulatao, 1981).

In most developing countries which are characterised by high fertility levels, cultural factors mean that children are seen to be of more value than in western nations. Caldwell (1982) has argued that in this context, couples almost always want their children to be more educated that in the past, so as to ensure that their children will achieve professional jobs, and in order to get status and financial benefits in the long run. As a result, children become more costly relative to the short run financial benefits. Consequently, the quality of children becomes more important to couples than their quantity. In addition higher education may lead to changing perceptions by the children themselves towards cultural norms (Cochrane, 1983).

Despite the reduced support by children of their parents, parents expect their children to support them in their old age, especially when parents are uncertain about their own ability to be self supporting (Nuget, 1985; Cain, 1981). This reason may explain the strong motivations for

high fertility which parents sustain, despite the decreasing financial benefits of having children.

Economists have argued that demand for children can be determined by the interplay between tastes for children and constraints on the couple, such as income and time availability (Becker, 1960; Willis, 1973). The determinants of fertility behaviour of course include a wide range of social, cultural, economic and psychological factors. Bulatao and Lee (1983) have suggested a model to represent the inter-relationships among these basic components and other variables (see Figure 1.1).

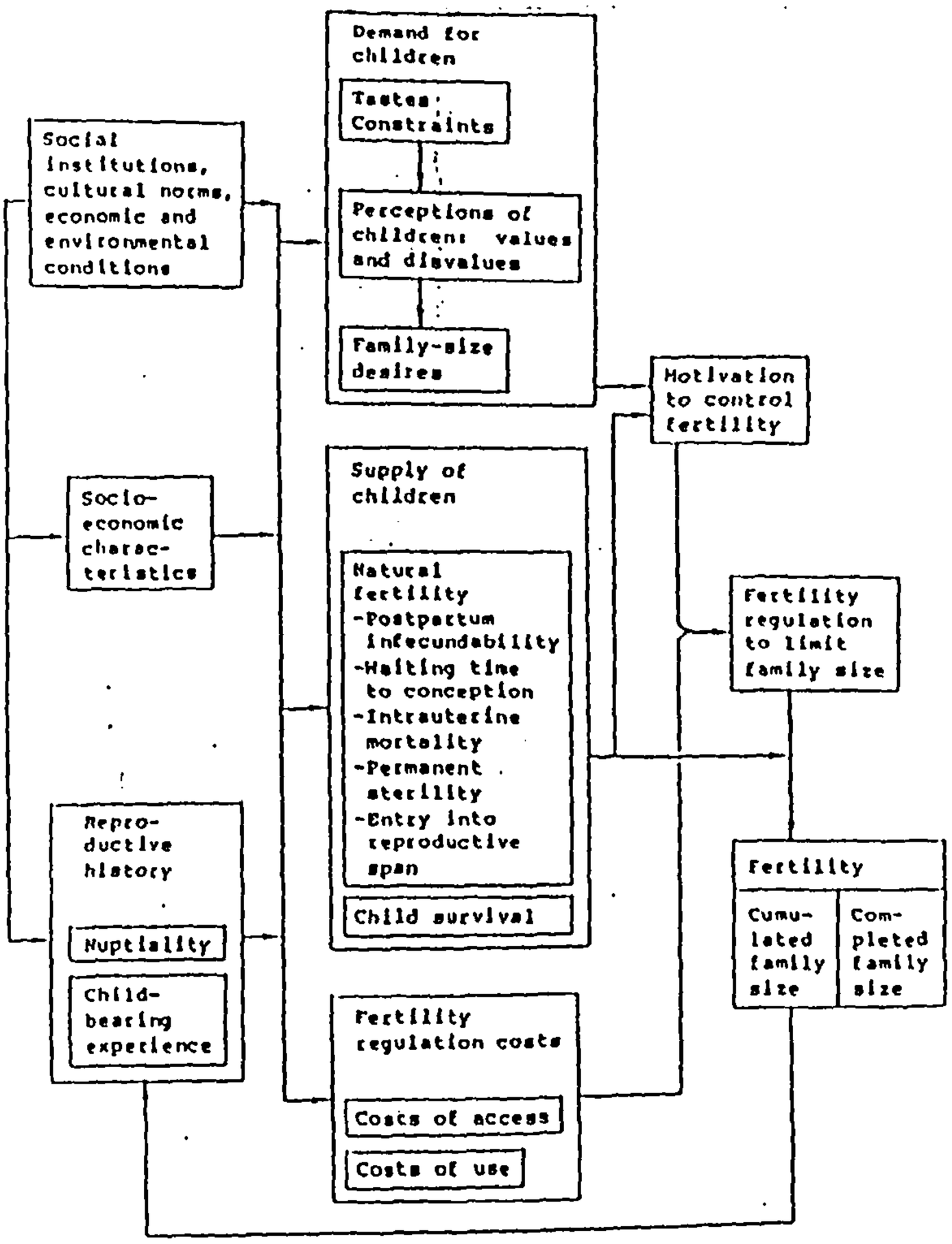
## 1.5 Fertility regulation

Demand and supply for children jointly determine motivation for fertility regulation. Once supply reaches or exceeds the desired number, therefore, couples are motivated to some degree to control their fertility. Whether they do so or not is another issue (Hermalin, 1983). It is to be expected that motivation to regulate fertility will be positively associated with the gap between supply and demand. In fact couples may practice family planning before reaching their desired family size in order to increase the birth interval (Mauldin and Berelson, 1978).

Motivation alone, is not an adequate reason to use contraceptives (Hermalin, 1983) but methods of fertility regulation, their availability and cost all should be taken into consideration. Fertility regulations involves a range

time involved, but also in other terms. For example, there may be costs arising from violating existing social norms and religious teaching, health costs (the degree of risk of using certain methods), and psychological costs. These costs will be a function of personal characteristics and an individuals social standing. Figure 1.2 shows a model which has been proposed by Compton and Coward (1989) which illustrates the way that these variables affect fertility.

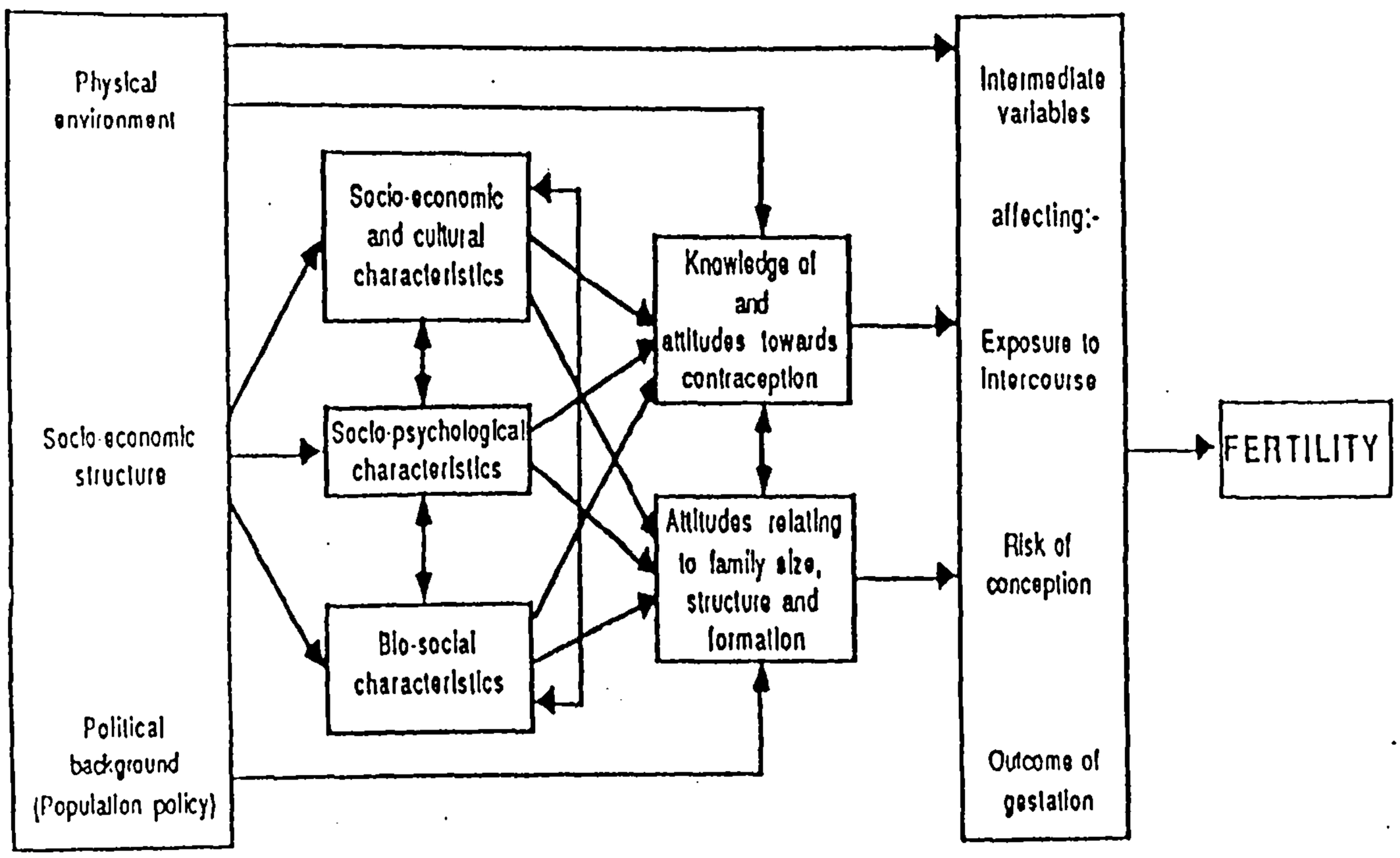
Figure 1.1: Inter-relationships between the basic components of fertility behaviour.




Source: Bulatao and Lee (1983) p10.

One of the major problems in most developing countries is the translation of motivations and fertility attitudes into actual behaviour. The translation depends not only on motivations and fertility costs, but also on the ability of couples to make independent and effective decisions. As is well known, in Arab society the influence of the extended family on a couples decisions may be considerable, as is the influence of the husband over his wife in making such decisions.

Figure 1.2: Variables which affect fertility.




Source: Compton and Coward (1989) p10.

Fertility regulation is defined in this thesis as all modern methods including both contraceptive methods and induced abortion. However, traditional and natural methods

such as prolonged breast feeding period and natural methods and abstinance from sexual intercourse are excluded. Fertility control in most demographic studies refer only to modern methods of fertility control.

## 1.6 Interaction between fertility components and modernisation.

In theory, in the absence of fertility regulation, completed family size is determined mainly by the supply side of the equation. Demand for children is close to supply or may even exceed it. As a consequence couples may not have any idea about the number of children wanted and there will be no motivation to control fertility.

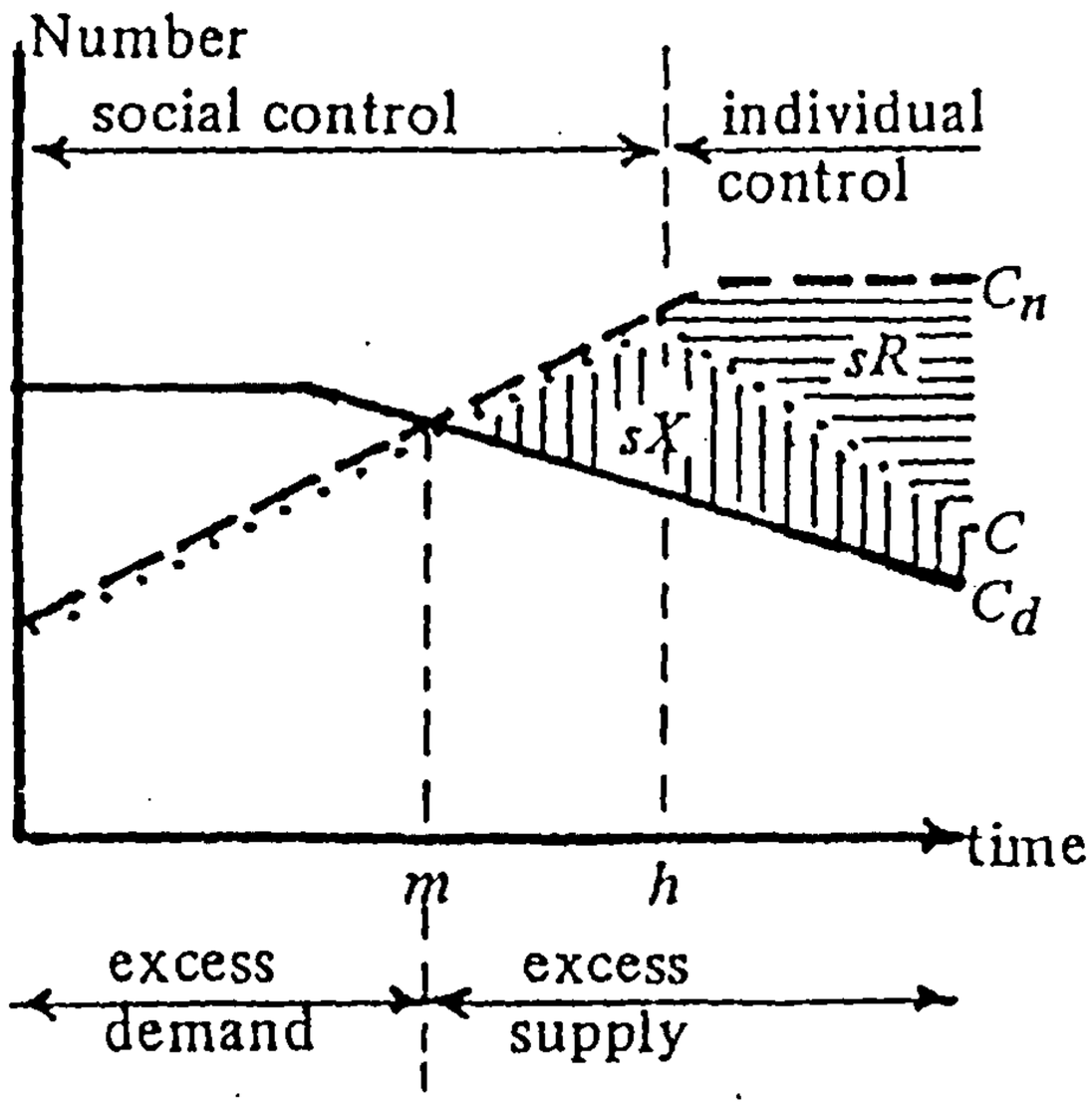
In developed countries demand for children is below supply, and fertility regulation is widely used. As a result, demand for children is considered to be the main determinant of fertility. Most developing countries have experienced dramatic reductions in infant mortality rates, while fertility levels have not followed the same pattern of mortality reduction. In some countries fertility levels have not declined and remain at a high level (the second stage of transition theory).

Easterlin (1975, 1978, 1982, 1983) has proposed a model which links fertility components with the development process (modernisation) through time. Modernisation can be defined as the transformation of economic, social and political organisation and in human personality (Easterlin, 1967). Four aspects of modernisation are selected for

special attention in Easterlin's model:

1. Public health and medical care.
2. Formal education and the mass media.
3. Urbanisation.
4. The introduction of new consumer goods.

Figure 1.3: Trends in fertility variables associated with economic and social modernization.




— — — $C_n$ is the number of surviving children parents would have in an unregulated fertility regime.

——— $C_d$ is the desired number of surviving children in a perfect contraceptive society.

. . . . . $C$ is the actual number of surviving children.

$sX$ is unwanted children, the excess of the actual number of children over the desired number.

$sR$ is the degree of voluntary fertility regulation, measured in terms of children averted.

Source: Easterlin (1982) p133.

This model sees fertility as evolving from a situation in which the couple cannot achieve their desired

number to one in which the potential number of children is in excess of the desired number. As a consequence the number of unwanted children increases if fertility regulation is not used.

The model identifies three main stages:

1. A pre-modern situation, where parents are unable to have as many children as they would like. In this stage, there is no motivation to limit fertility. The number of children parents have in this stage is mainly governed by natural fertility and the probability of child survival. It is to be expected that the approach of modernisation will, through time, have an impact on the supply determinants increasing the actual number of children surviving to adulthood (Olusanga, 1971; Findlay and Findlay, 1987). Family planning in this stage may not succeed since its objectives are contrary to personal fertility preferences.
2. In this second stage, the potential number of children will increase, while the desired family size and fertility costs will be reduced. As a result there is an increase in couples motivation for fertility control, in order to avoid having unwanted children. In this stage the response to socio-economic development and fertility regulation emerges in a differential fashion in society, with some segments of the population being more favourably disposed to it

than others. Changes in the socio-economic environment will be required to raise living standards and aspirations to a certain level before producing a reduction in desired family size (Davis, 1967).

3. The third stage can be described as one in which there is a rapid reduction in couples desire for children, an increasing control of fertility and a reduction in the number of unwanted children. This occurs as the ability of couples to make their own independent decisions and as availability of efficient contraceptive methods makes these decisions effective in producing changes in fertility behaviour.

## 1.7 Family size preference

Fertility preferences, when implemented, are potentially very important in shaping actual fertility. From a strictly applied point of view information on reproductive motivations may be useful to population policy makers (Lightbourne and Macdonald, 1982). From the theoretical point of view, information on reproductive behaviour and the motives behind such behaviour may be helpful in understanding the forces affecting fertility, and increasing knowledge about the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (El-Khorazaty, 1985). Lightbourne (1985) has argued that desired family size is the most important determinant of fertility control in developing countries.

The term "fertility preference" has been used to refer to several different conceptions of the number of children

which a couple may wish to have. These include intended family size, expected family size, desired family size, ideal family size and the best number of children (Ryder and Westoff, 1969). Fertility surveys vary widely in their approaches to measuring these concepts. Also different measures and approaches can be used because there is no standard measure.

Demand for children usually refers to the number of surviving children which couples would like to have during their reproductive years. Demographers often attempt to measure and examine the demand side by measuring desired family size from couples' responses in fertility surveys.

A distinction, sometimes, is made between couples desired family size and the ideal family size for the population in general, although the two terms are often used synonymously. Several studies have attempted to consider the differences between the two concepts (Ryder and Westoff, 1969). In developed countries the ideal family size corresponds fairly closely with the actual behaviour of couples (Whelpton et al., 1966), as a result of the widespread use of and access to contraceptives (Higgins, 1962). This is not the case in developing countries. Desired family size, in developing countries in general, and in Arab countries in particular, does not correspond with ideal family size simply because of the influence of traditional norms on respondents responses. Any changes in the socio-economic and political

circumstances of a society in a developing country will be reflected in peoples views of what constitutes the ideal family size. Therefore, in studying ideal family size it is important to do so in the changing context of the specific society under study. This stands in stark contradiction to the arguments of some researchers such as Bumpass (1967).

There have been several studies which confirm the idea that ideal family size changes with changing political situations. The widespread baby boom phenomenon in Europe and North America after the Second World War, for example, may have been a result of changing attitudes towards ideal family size (Bouvier, 1980). Similarly it is to be expected that ideal family size in the West Bank will be higher than in other Arab countries as a result of the area's military occupation. There seems little doubt that many West Bank people consider population growth as one part of their struggle to maintain their roots in the areas (Ata, 1986; Abu-Lughod, 1982).

A couples' decision regarding desired family size will be affected by a range of economic and social variables such as family income, financial resources, family power, perceptions of the role of children as a source of support in old age, etc. All these functions vary from one society to another, or even from one group to another within a given society (Lee, 1977). There are, therefore, a great many factors which affect desired family size in any given society (Arnold et al., 1975) and which for any couple will

affect their perceptions of the costs and benefits of having children (Willis, 1973).

Inquiries into desired family size were first included in a fertility survey conducted in the U.S.A. in the early 1950s. During the last three decades K.A.P. (knowledge, attitudes and practice of birth control) surveys have become widespread in developing countries (Kondel and Prachuabmoh, 1973).

Various types of questions can be used in measuring desired family size. They include:

(a) Questions about the desire for additional children. Desired family size may be computed by adding the number to the actual number of children the family already has. Sometimes such questions are replaced by asking if additional children are wanted in future. This question is used frequently in fertility surveys carried out on couples in the reproductive ages.

(b) Questions about the total number of children a couple would like to have. These types of questions were used and directed at the wives interviewed in the World Fertility Survey (U.N. 1981). The problem of using such questions is that the actual family size may affect the respondents' preferences (Freedman et al., 1975).

(c) Questions measuring ideal family size. Respondents were asked about the number of children they thought other people like neighbours should have (Blake,

1967). Another variant of this question which has been used is to ask respondents about what they consider to be a suitable number of children for a family to have in general.

(d) Questions about desired number of children and their gender. These types of questions are very important in societies with a strong male preference. Sometimes questions on the desired gender of children may include information about birth order and spacing between children. Coombs et al. (1975) presented respondents with different possible mixes of children in their study of desired number of children in order to discover the effect of child gender on people's responses.

Arnold et al. (1975) argued that questions on desired family size become more reliable if such questions are followed by other questions about the number of surviving children, number of children who have died and contraceptive usage.

1.7.1 Validity

Measures of desired family size must evaluate the validity of responses. Respondents should be asked to report what was their desired family size at the time of marriage in order to discover how much responses may vary through time. The respondents may, for example, be influenced by his or her current situation, yet the actions which the researcher wants to evaluate relate to past behaviour and perceptions.

The validity of direct questions about desired family size has been put in doubt by Frohardt-Lane et al. (1977). They have criticized direct methods on several grounds as have Kondel and Prachuabmoh (1973) who suggest that direct questions are particularly inappropriate in developing countries where birth control is not widely used. They have also argued that the validity of responses is very low among illiterate groups. Lightbourne (1985) found that poor, uneducated women in rural areas in traditional societies are not motivated to restrict their fertility.

Several studies have made direct enquiries into whether or not respondents have thought about desired family size (see Mason, 1983). Gray and Morgan (1976) have argued that meaningful responses may be achieved, but only by adequate probing and careful phrasing of questions. This argument was also supported by Ware (1974) who found that most respondents who refused to answer questions on religious or cultural grounds would have been willing to respond if they had been asked about the number of children "they hoped that God would give them".

The validity of responses on desired family size is also associated with the use of contraceptives. In societies where controlling the supply of children has been impossible or extremely costly, responses to survey questions about desired family size should not be taken to reflect actual family size or expected fertility behaviour. Bulatao and Arnold (1977) have argued that by contrast in

societies where contraception has become more acceptable and more widely available, couples take considerable interest in the number of children which they would like to have. Contraception is an important factor in determining the relationship between desired and actual family size. When contraceptive methods are available, cheap and acceptable, actual family size should be equal to or slightly exceed the desired number of children (Ryder, 1981). For example, Knodel and Prachuabmoh (1973) found that only a few women in Thailand who had used contraceptives had exceeded their desired number of children.

It is possible to conclude that when contraception is unknown or unavailable the validity of responses on desired family size will be low, but in other cases they will be of some value.

1.7.2 Respondents

Questions about desired family and childbearing behaviour attitudes are usually directed to either the husband or the wife. Most studies on fertility attitudes restrict the questions to the wife on the implicit assumption that wives' views on these matters equate to those of their husbands' (Stycos et al., 1968). In many studies wives have been asked about their husband's attitudes as well as their attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). One of the criticisms of the World Fertility Survey was that questions on these issues were only directed to wives and ignored husbands attitudes. This researcher

would argue that the husband's role and attitudes are, however, a crucial factor in fertility preferences. This is especially the case in male dominated societies, such as the Arab world, where the husband is usually the key decision maker for the family.

There are studies of desired family size which have dealt only with husbands (Griffith, 1973; Tobin et al., 1975; Lightbourne, 1985). Mitchell (1972) found that when there was disagreement between the responses of married couples in his survey in Hong Kong (as to whether or not to have more children) the husband's decision always tended to prevail.

Several studies which interviewed both husbands and wives separately, found the responses and attitudes of spouses towards family size and fertility issues to be quite different (Campbell, 1974, Coombs and Fernandez, 1978; Westoff, 1981). For example, Campbell (1974) found that husbands' generally desire more children than their wives, and that wives look more favourably on the use of contraceptives. Westoff (1981) found that 40% of couples in Thailand gave identical responses about desired family size. In most developing countries the husband's opposition towards using contraceptives is an important factor in explaining the low proportion of women using contraceptives. Cole and Allen (1979) have found that more educated males tended to have more positive attitudes towards the use of contraceptives than the less educated

ones.

In developing countries, interviewing both husbands and wives separately may lead to a better understanding of future fertility change, because couples may never discuss fertility aspects with each other (Coombs and Fernandez, 1978; Pullum, 1983). Also it is important to take into account the influence of the extended family and cultural norms on fertility preferences (Mason, 1983). Townes et al. (1980) have argued that some studies which focus only on husbands or wives preferences have failed to provide the mechanism for moving from intent to actual behaviour.

## 1.8 Desired and actual family size

The relationship between desired and actual family size is two-way. Desired family size affects the actual number of children in the family, especially when a couple has an idea about the number of children they want and when contraceptives are available. Therefore, an association would exist between desired and actual family size (Pullum, 1980; Namboodiri, 1983). Questions about desired family size should be accompanied by questions on attitudes to and use of contraceptives. Knodel and Prachuabmoh (1973) found that the use of contraceptives tended to be greater once couples had reached or had nearly reached their desired family size.

The relationship between actual and desired family size is likely to be very strong, if couples have a clear conception of their desired family size before having any children (Pullum, 1983).

The existence of a strong relationship between actual and desired family size has one of two possible explanations. First, preferences may be being successfully implemented. Secondly, respondents may tend to rationalize their preferences in terms of the actual number of children which they have (Pullum, 1983; Easterlin, 1973). Rationalization can take place long before the family has been completed. Pullum (1980) has argued that when the availability of birth control methods is limited, rationalization becomes the main explanation of the relationship between the two variables.

Rationalization effects are easier to identify in circumstances where a large proportion of respondents indicate their desired family size as equal to their number of surviving children. The question of desired family size considered to be relatively meaningless when respondents who have achieved or exceeded the desired number declare that they do not want more children, but at the same time do not use contraceptives. Knodel and Prachuabmoh (1973) found that in Thailand only 25% of currently married women reported their desired family size to be equal to their actual family size. The proportion of women who reported their desired family size to exceed their actual number of surviving children, showed a rapid decline in relation to increases in the number of living children.

1.9 Gender preference and couples' attitudes

The subject of parental attitudes and aspirations

concerning the gender of children has attracted considerable analytical attention research (Vlassoff, 1990; Prachuabmoh et al. 1974; Williamson, 1976). The interest of demographers has been aroused mainly by evidence that gender preference may influence the process of family formation (United Nations Population Division, 1981). More specifically gender preference operates through:

1) Completed family size. Most research would suggest that parents may go beyond their desired number of children in order to achieve the specific gender preferred (Cleland et al., 1983). Khan and Sirageldin (1977) found that Pakistani couples with a predominance of daughters were more willing to have up to three times as many additional children as couples who had the same number of sons. Berelson (1964) found that, among 5,000 couples in Turkey, parents with more sons were less likely to want more children than those of the same parity, but with more daughters. Repetto (1972) by contrast found no evidence in Morroco to confirm the idea that couples with a male preference would have more children if they already had more females. Parchuabmoh et al. (1974) also found that son preference did not have much influence on the desire for additional children in Thailand. Parachuabmoh et al's findings in Thailand may be attributed to a different pattern of culture where women's roles are different from that of their Arab counterparts.

2) Gender preference is a big obstacle to control of family size. Parents who tend to control their births by

using efficient contraceptives after achieving their desired number of children may be reluctant to use such methods when they fail to achieve the minimum number of children of their preferred gender (Cleland et al., 1983). Morsa (1966) in his study in Tunisia, found that women with strong male preferences tended not to report the use of any contraceptive methods. Eliot (1968) argued that Algerian women with male child preferences continued childbearing long after they had reached the desired total number of children. Eillov (1967) noted that women attending family planning clinics in Ankara (Turkey) had more sons than daughters. Arnold and Zhaoxiang (1986) have found in one child families in China, that the proportion of couples who currently used contraceptives was higher if the couple had a son than if they had a daughter.

The decision of couples with strong male preferences who want additional children will therefore be affected by the probability of having a son as their next child. Therefore the final decision with regard to having additional children will be determined by the anticipated gender of the new child (McClelland, 1979). It is to be expected that family size will increase with increasing strength of feeling about male child preferences. A conflict between strong male preference and the desire for a small family size is therefore likely to occur. Cain (1978) has confirmed this suggestion when he indicated that one argument often given to explain the low motivation for

limiting families in many developing countries is strong male preference.

3) Sexual equality. Gender preference can be used as a rough indicator to measure the level of sexual equality in a society. A society which is characterized by a lack of strong gender preference is quite likely to be egalitarian. Therefore, gender preference cannot be seen as an isolated set of attitudes reflecting only fertility behaviour, but is an indicator of more profound attitudes to gender roles in society (Arnold and Zhaoziang, 1986). Levy (1957) has attributed son preference in Arab and Islamic societies to the division of labour and to male dominance in the family and society. El-Badry (1969) has pointed out that in Pakistan the death rate among females relative to males is higher in the childhood cohorts (from one to four years). One possible explanation for such differences is attributed to son preference where male children receive better nutrition and health care.

### 1.9.1. Motivations for male child preferences

Male child preference is a common attribute of traditional male dominated societies. Male dominance is evident in these societies in most aspects of the control and transfer of wealth (Rizk, 1959; Arnold and Zhaoxiang, 1986). Male child preference is found to some extent in much of the developing world except in some Latin American countries (Williamson, 1976). In Arab and Islamic countries, male child preference is considered to be very strong and in most cases contributes to their high

fertility levels (Prothero, 1961). Reasons for male child preference include:-

1) Cultural reasons. Strong male child preference has its roots in Arab culture. Arabs even in the pre-Islamic era were in favour of male births which were thought to have higher status because of the more important role of men in relation to the economic organization of the family (Schieffelin, 1967). Yaukey (1961) has described the influence of traditional Arab culture on Lebanese couples as follows:

> "There is little place for mature men and women without sons. The strength and power of the family as a unit is measured in terms of the number of sons born into it. The father gauges his success as head of the family largely in terms of the children he has (especially males). The same is true for women who gain security through their sons"
>
> Yaukey (1961) pp. 9-11

2) Religious reasons. Levy (1957) has attributed the strong motives for male preference in Islamic countries to the influence of Islam which gives males superiority over females and has described these societies as male dominated societies. On the other hand most Muslim scholars reject the idea that Islam places men in superior positions to women. The consensus of opinion seems to be that Islam promoted women's positions and strengthened their role in society, giving them fuller rights than in the past.

3) Socio-economic reasons. Male child preference might change over time in relation to changes in socio-economic development levels. In developed countries couples are less

motivated to have male children than in developing countries. A study in Israel carried out by Goshen-Gottstein (1966) interviewed 159 Jewish women expecting their first baby. Only 27% hoped their child would be male, while 31% stated a preference for the baby to be female. The remainder had no preference. Also Inkeles and Smith (1974) found that only 44% of male workers in an Israeli factory preferred more sons while 52% had no preference. The reason for the low male preference in Israel may be the influence of western culture reflecting the fact that the majority of Jews have migrated from the more developed countries. At the other extreme, Lahiri (1974) found the ideal sex ratio at birth was perceived in some Indian states to be about 300 male to 100 female babies.

Many studies in Arab countries have also confirmed regional variations in the ideal sex ratio between rural and urban areas (Kirk, 1966). For example, Risk (1959) found that the ideal sex ratio for Egyptian women who had completed their family size was 130 and 280 males per 100 females in urban and rural areas respectively. For young women the sex ratio was 122 and 240 males per 100 females for urban and rural areas respectively. Another study carried out by Eliot (1966) in Algeria, showed that the desired sex ratio for urban women was 120 while in Berber villages, the ideal sex ratio reached 240 males per 100 females.

For changes to occur in couples' attitudes towards

male child preferences in most developing countries, improvements in social and economic conditions will first be necessary (Fawcett et al., 1974). These changes would reduce the effect of the social, economic and psychological reasons that caused male preference.

In addition to male child preference, couples may have preference with regard to birth order (e.g. first child to be male and the second to be female and the last one to be male). This makes the measuring of son preference more complicated, and especially the ability of couples to control the number of births.

To summarise, the search for a better understanding of desired family size requires analysis of gender preferences in relation to a couples' evolving attitudes towards family formation. However, gender preferences are only one of a number of important factors such as political attitudes, cultural norms, womens employment, male dominance and family structure which affect a couples attitudes and ultimately actual family size. As an example of the importance of gender preferences, Dhindsa (1986) found 91% of couples who were not satisfied with their actual family composition tended to enlarge their families in the hope of having more male children.

## 1.10 Fertility decision making

The essentials of any social science theory are the variables and relations that specify social behaviour. The theoretical structure of all such theories become complex

as soon as the decision making process is introduced (Leibenstien, 1981). This is especially the case when investigating decisions on family size. Are these decisions which are taken really significant in affecting behaviour? Which of the various factors and circumstances that influence the decision should be included as the most important explanatory variables? The best approach to the problem is therefore to seek to understand the nature of the relationship on the one hand between spouses, and on the other hand between married couples and society, in order to determine whether they are free and independent to make their own decisions in terms of the social, economic and psychological costs and benefits of having children. Are couples they pressurized by social norms, and the consideration of trying to emulate others and act according to the models of other reference groups in society?

Fertility decision making involves choices between alternative forms of behaviour. Some of the psychological and economic models which have been put forward have incorporated perceptions both of the balance between the costs and benefits of having children and also the perceptios of the acceptability of fertility regulation (Hass, 1974). The choice or preference for one set of values and form of behaviour rather than another reflects an assessment of the relative importance of the social and psychological costs and rewards that accompany specific types of behaviour and value systems (Scanzoni and Fox, 1980).

The idea that couples make their own decisions in a rational way in order to maximize the expected rewards and minimize expected costs have been used to explain childbearing behaviour and fertility of at least two different levels of analysis. Economists have used decision theory to explain variations in fertility at aggregate levels, such as differences in completed family size by social class (see Easterlin, 1967). By contrast anthropologists and psychologists have used decisions theory to explain the way individuals come to make particular decisions. For example, decision making processes may be influenced by the nature of husband-wife interactions (familial power relations, and levels of marital satisfaction). These in turn may have an important role in determining family size (Bagozzi and Van Loo, 1978).

Hollerbach (1980) has classified fertility decision into four types. These include:-

(a) Non-rational decisions where the individual acts against his better interest.

(b) Coercive decisions, when one individual has the power to enforce a decision on another.

(c) Joint decisions, when decisions are reached by two or more individuals on the basis of accommodation, compromise, compliance or mutual agreement.

(d) Unilateral decisions, when the decision is made by one or more individuals in conflict with others' desires.

The research evidence suggest that fertility decision making in traditional or pre-transitional societies is strongly influenced not only by a couples own parents but also by kin and to some extent by non-kin groups all of whom exert an influence (Kar and Talbot, 1980). Caldwell (1983) has argued that in such societies the older generation controlled every aspect of life including familial production, consumption, marriage and fertility decision making. The influence of kin on a couples' decisions may be through different channels (a) by social consensus transmitted to the individual (b) by advice and counsel, (c) by shared values, judgement on the priority of fertility related behaviour and the imposition of sanctions.

Individual decision making must therefore be an irrelevant concept in primitive societies with high fertility levels, because the full weight of societal norms reinforces existing childbearing behaviour (Hagar, 1987). Therefore, most variations in fertility level can be attributed to external factors such as environmental and biological ones. Many studies support this view that individual decisions are of little importance in this context (see Marshall et al., 1972). As a result individual perceptions in these societies should be ignored as predictors of fertility behaviour and the focus should be on how corporate social decisions are reached and how norms and values are transmitted and produce distinctive demographic behaviour. Becker (1960) has argued that

fertility only starts to decline when individual decisions become more influencial.

Changing kin relations in many developing countries underlies an economic transfer in familial power caused mainly by Western influences such as the media and the education system. Family relations change in favour of reducing age and sex differentiation, lowering the economic value of children and encouraging fertility regulation (Hagar, 1987). These changes may transfer the key decision-making process from the older to the younger generation (Caldwell, 1983). The resulting changes in fertility may be far greater than those expected as a specific consequence of economic change alone. It is possible to argue that fertility decision making processes and behaviour remain stable despite substantial economic changes.

In general, decision making is regarded as the outcome of an unique combination of individual volition and social interaction found within the family unit (Bagozzi and Van Loo, 1978). However some researchers have failed to pay adequate attention to the mechanisms linking individuals' intents to their behaviour. This is probably because they focus only on individual decisions and have ignored the social setting and cultural norms which constrain the individual's actions (Townes et al., 1980).

Besides kin influence on couples' decisions, friends, neighbours, health professionals and community leaders may

also affect couples' decisions by being a source of information or a means of communication (Hull, 1983). Hill et al. (1959) indicated that more than 30% of Puerto Rican couples reported that their decisions were influenced by non-kin. Lee (1979) pointed out that women are more likely to adopt family planning if a woman in their social group has already used contraceptives, since this means they can receive information and emotional support. Miller and Godwin (1977) have argued that people usually sought advice from people whom they regard as wise, even although they may not be relatives.

Leibenstein (1981) has proposed a hierarchy of rules with regard to fertility decisions. These can be harmonised with the stages of the demographic transition and with levels of socio-economic development. These rules can be applied to all decisions concerning marriage, contraceptives, breastfeeding, abortion and desired family size. Leibenstien (1981) has argued that decisions depend on conventional behaviour, partial calculation and full calculation. The first two alternatives mainly dominate in traditional societies and can be studied by the anthropological approach or sometimes by other social science methods of measuring attitudes. This is true despite the argument of Arnold et al. (1975), which says that as long as individuals want as many children as possible, it is irrelevant to study fertility decision making. This argument ignores the fact that the supply side is considered as a product of decision making which in

turn determines fertility. The latter two alternatives require more complex decision making models because they involve comparing alternative strategies and selecting the best or most satisfactory one in relation to the individual's functions (Simon, 1979).

1.10.1 Relations between spouses

Having children requires two people from different sexes, but they are not always equally involved in fertility decisions. Couples relations are determined by cultural factors and socio-economic characteristics. These relations usually change with socio-economic development in society. Better communication between couples has been associated with the wives educational level, socio-economic status and levels of urbanization (Caldwell, 1968; Mitchell, 1972). Moreover, the family background is a very important element in affecting a couple's communication (Gecas, 1979).

Communication can be defined as verbalization of information, ideas, attitudes and beliefs from one person to another. Communication is an important issue in decision making because it links the husband and wife in the decision making process by discussion and may lead to mutual agreement about the desired family size and family planning (Hill et al., 1959).

Measuring couples levels of communication faces many different problems. They include the following:-

(a) The majority of studies on couples' communication are

based on interview only with the wife (Hollerbach, 1980), while only a few studies pertain to men (Hall, 1971). Very few studies have collected information from both men and women (Coombs and Fernandez, 1978). Research making comparisons between the responses of husbands and wives have indicated that discussion does not occur extensively on fertility issues and joint fertility decisions are not predominate (Coombs and Chang, 1981; Yaukey et al., 1967).

(b) Treatment of communication as static. The examination of the relationship between communication and fertility at one point in time presents communication as a static rather than dynamic process (Beckman, 1983).

(c) Conjugal relationships and communication are largely defined in relation to the power of spouses in making fertility decisions.

Two other points with regard to communication between couples are worthy of comment:-

First, egalitarianism. It has been argued that an egalitarian relation between spouses negatively affects the demand for children and helps couples not to exceed their desired family size. The problem of studying egalitarian decision making is that its significance changes during the life cycle. Studies by Coombs and Chang (1981) in developing countries indicated that younger couples tend to have a more egalitarian decision making style than their elders. Also they found that disagreement between couples may be attributed to differences between spouses such as age and education. Moreover Bhatia and Neuman (1980) have

argued that levels of communication are strongly related to social class and generational differences.

Second: husband's approval of the use of contraceptives. Studies in developing countries have indicated that husbands' approval is an important factor encouraging wives to use contraceptives (Stycos et al., 1968). Chamie (1978) found that 40% of women who abandoned the use of contraceptives attributed this to their husband's opposition. Kim and Lee (1973) pointed out that a husband's approval of family planning had a significant effect on the proportion of women using contraceptives in South Korea, especially among less educated women who depended more on their husband's knowledge. This may lead to the conclusion that a husband's influence is likely to be more pervasive in cases of disagreements, especially in male dominant societies.

Husband-wife communication can take more than one possible form. Some researchers have argued that such communication can be seen as a consequence rather than a determinant, where husbands and wives start discussing birth control or number of children desired after child conception (Hartford, 1971) while others suggest that a high level of communication leads to contraceptives. Moreover Poffenberger (1968) has argued that effective communication between couples does not necessarily lead to birth control, especially when the extended family has the final say in childbearing decisions.

The relationship between couples can be classified into three main categories (Rainwater, 1965).

(1) Joint role relationship. In this situation husbands and wives share activities, tasks and decision making.

(2) Segregated role relationships. In this case the division of labour and activities within the family is emphasised.

(3) Intermediate role relationships. As suggested by the term this implies a situation which falls between the above categories.

Finally the status of women and their role in the family and society is very important and should be taken into account in studying couples' decisions. It is believed that a wife's power leads to effective and higher level of communication and not vice-versa. Hill et al. (1959) found a negative association between male dominance and the use of contraceptives in Puerto Rico, while Mitchell (1972) found a positive relation between greater power by the wife and the use of contraceptives among women in Hong Kong.

1.11 Cultural norms and child preference

The study of fertility preference and childbearing attitudes should focus on two dimensions: couples characteristics and the characteristics of the groups of which the individuals are members. The latter includes analysis of family structure, cultural factors and socio-economic relations between couples and kin (Knodel and Prachuabmoh, 1973). This means that ideally macro and

micro-analytical approaches should be used at the same time to understand fertility behaviour at different levels of socio-economic development. For example some fertility aspects are more easily identified by the first approach, such as abortion and contraceptive use, while others are more easily detected by the latter approach such as marriage patterns and breastfeeding. Tobin (1976) has argued that desired family size should be regarded as a result of the interplay between structural and cultural factors on the one hand and personal characteristics on the other.

Cultural norms are often used to explain, predict and interpret trends and patterns of reproductive behaviour. Gibbs (1965) has argued that social norms constitute an expectation, not just a description of behaviour, because they are considered as rules stating how people ought to feel, think, behave and act in particular circumstances (Hawthorn, 1970). To specify the mechanisms through which norms operate towards marriage and childbearing aspects, the interaction between individual and kin members is an important element in determining individual behaviour, such as when, how and to whom he/she should marry. They also affect when couples start and later stop having children by using contraceptives (Page and Lesthaeghe, 1981).

Cultural norms constitute the base for husband and wife relationships and may ultimately affect the decision making process itself in more direct ways. The effect of

cultural norms seems to be more clearly related to intermediate variables than to directly determining the number of children in a family (Lee, 1979).

The influence of cultural factors varies from one culture to another. Some cultures are relatively tolerant of change so long as it does not contradict existing rules. In rigid cultures any deviation is considered to be a great sin. The nature of culture affects the speed of social change in a society (Lightbourne, 1985).

Nowadays it is wrong to assume that most people in traditional societies lived in isolated environments especially after the improvement of road networks, communications, mass media, education and migration. These factors help the transfer of new ideas from one society to another, and consequently challenge traditional culture. Ryder (1973) has explained how education can be the principle force for change in intergenerational attitudes. The advent of state schools, for example, takes children out of family control to some extent and may introduce changes to some concepts and norms which children would otherwise have learned from their families at an earlier age. Marshall et al. (1972) have argued that cultural norms may change over time, so as to facilitate socio-economic mobility without eradicating the key elements of culture which distinguish a society's identity.

Cultural norms reinforced by negative sanctions are imposed on those who deviate and positive sanctions are granted to those who conform (Mason, 1983). The socio-

economic and psychological influence of deviating from traditional norms should be added to other costs of having children. Caldwell (1982) argued that the maintenance of traditional systems and norms in many developing countries may be attributed to the perception of parents that they should be treated in the same manner as their own parents.

Most people in traditional societies adopt traditional values without questioning the premises on which these rest. A wide range of factors contribute to sustaining traditional value systems such as religious factors imparted through religious teaching and social sanctions. The value of a cohesive extended family structure is easily illustrated in many developing countries given its importance as a source of help (economic and emotion) to family members, especially in periods of need and illness. Ryder (1973) has argued that the introduction of alternatives sources of help to the individual from outside the family is a key influence in introducing and making acceptable a wide range of new ideas. This stage is considered to be the first step in bringing about fundamental social changes.

Several studies carried out by social and cultural anthropologists have attracted the interest of demographers (see Jones, 1977) because the process of reproduction in many developing countries is still strongly influenced by cultural factors (Mehryer et al., 1977). The influence of cultural norms can be noticed in different aspects of

reproductive behaviour. These are:-

1. Decision making. In traditional societes most of fertility decisions are determined by the views of extended family members (Arnold et al., 1975). The extent of power of the husband and wife differ from one culture to another. Womens' decisions often seem to be irrelevant if only men are viewed as responsible for making decisions. Also even if couples' have a clear view of their objectives, their decision making power may still be weak and may not result in action, if real decision making power lies in the hands of their extended families.
2. Child value. Cultural factors may maximize child value without regard to the cost and benefits of children to an individual family. From the economic point of view in Arab countries, cultural factors, supported by Islamic teaching, reduce a couples' worries about their children's needs, since many people still believe that he who "gave children teeth will also provide them with food".
3. Womens' position in the family. In traditional culture the values of women are often measured largely by the number of children they have (Arnold et al., 1975). It has been argued that the relative power and influence enjoyed by women as mothers is relevant to their childbearing preferences and perceptions. Bulatao (1982) concluded that mothers in general are awarded higher status and treated with more social respect than

childless women. It is believed in Arab societies that women who receive little satisfaction from their marriage (relationship with their husbands and their families) will seek it in motherhood. It is believed that having children supports the wife's position and protects them from divorce or from their husband marrying again.

4. Marriage pattern. To marry and produce children has been emphasized as important in most traditional cultures, and especially in Arab culture (Ata, 1986). Cultural norms usually determine age at marriage for both male and female. In Arab culture an early age at marriage especially for females is still practised. In rural Egypt, El-Khorazaty (1985) found that nearly all marriages were arranged by couples' parents. Also he found that more than 90% of females were married before reaching 20 years of age. Mauldin and Berelson (1978) found that over 40% of fertility decline in some developing countries could be attributed to delays in the age of marriage.

5. Desired number of children. Cultural norms may directly effect the number of children preferred by couples. Caldwell (1978) has argued that cultural norms and religious beliefs operate directly to sustain high fertility levels, but time also moulds a society in such a way as to bring rewards from high fertility. Indirectly cultural norms may affect desired family

size through social, economic, political and religious considerations. Arab and Islamic culture has been described as strongly pro-natalist where early marriages still are widely practised in order to have large families. Farooq (1985) found in tropical Africa that Muslims tended to desire and attain larger numbers of children than other groups.

6. Taste. The term taste has been emphasized by Easterlin (1975). Taste covered a wide range of cultural factors such as social pressures, social norms, fear and satisfaction. Therefore, in order to change couples' tastes, there should be changes in peoples' attitudes and beliefs towards the desired number of children. Mehryar et al. (1977) attributed the failure of family planning programmes to bring down fertility levels to cultural factors such as attitudes and beliefs.
7. Gender preference. Williamson (1976) indicated that in many developing countries, male children are preferred over female ones. The strong motivation for having male children was supported by cultural factors despite the fact that females sometimes provide more help and support to their families than male children.

One of the common approaches to measuring the effect of cultural norms in surveys is to ask respondents about their approval or disapproval of particular behaviour. Few surveys in developing countries have used this approach to measure desired family size. Simmons (1974) has suggested that the most suitable way to discover about

family size norms is to ask respondents about their views of the number of children which would either make a family too large or too small. Caldwell (1982) has used "agreement and disagreement" scales to measure respondents' opinions and attitudes towards fertility behaviour.

1.12 Socio economic factors and couples' preference

Socio-economic developmental levels can be measured by many factors. The most frequent variables used in demographic studies are family income, place of residence (rural and urban), education and women's work. Lightbourne (1985) found that these variables have a significant influence on desired family size.

Socio-economic development may radically alter the demand for children and shift couples' preferences from having large families to having small and moderate sized ones. This could be a result of the following factors:-

(a) Socio-economic development leads to increased educational attainment, and higher aspirations to gain a higher levels of education.

(b) A reduction in children's contribution, during their early years to the household income.

(c) The shift from agricultural activity to other economic sectors requires an investment of human and physical capital, and a shift from an unskilled workforce to a more skilled labour force (Richards (1983).

(d) Changes in couples' taste. Couples look more

favourably on consumer goods, including those necessary for a better quality of children. In turn this may lead them to wish to have smaller familes.

(e) Increase in women's employment opportunities in the waged labour market may raise the direct cost of having children, because as a result time will become a more important and valuable resource to working parents.

(f) The breakdown of traditional systems and the weakness of traditional norms and values to challenge new ideas about life style. A change away from traditional systems may reduce the presence of benefits to parents of having children and may increase parents' desire for economic independence.

One United Nations (1981) study, using data from 15 countries, focussed on currently married women with three living children and showed that education and women's occupations have a significant effect on average desired family size. On this basis it was argued that the average desired family size changes as a result of changes in a couples' circumstances. Some studies suggest that analysis of women's characteristics give the best basis for the prediction of fertility preferences (Singh and Casterline, 1985).

1.12.1 Income.

The income-fertility relationship has long played a central role in the demographic transition literature. In the long run income growth and economic development tend to

reduce fertility. The relationship between income and desired family size is complex since changes in income go hand in hand with changes in education, female employment, parental aspirations, time value, availability of consumption goods and technology.

Simon (1977) has examined the effect of income on desired family size over both the short and long term. He did this to distinguish between the direct and indirect influence of income on fertility preference. Turchi (1975) found that an increase in income in the short term reduces the number of desired children if alternative goods and services are efficient in providing parents with social and psychological satisfaction.

Many studies have found an inverse relationship between income and desired family size. Dhindsa (1986) for example found that people from lower income groups have a tendency to produce a higher number of children compared to those from higher income groups. Farooq (1985) found income to be positively associated with the supply side (natural fertility) and negatively associated with fertility preference. Backer and Lewis (1974) argued that an increase in income enhances the desire for a higher quality of children, hence, parents with a higher income, desire a higher education for their children more than do lower income parents. Coombs and Sun (1978) found that the desired number of children decreased as the husband income increased, but the correlation between income and desired

was not strong. Blake and Delpinal (1979) found that income had little effect on the desired family size after controlling other variables.

The effect of income on the desired family size may be influenced to a large extent by a family's social and economic conditions. For example, the effect of higher income in an urban area may differ from that in rural ones. Encarnacion (1974) found that in the Phillipines there was a negative relationship between income and desired fertility in urban areas and a positive association in rural areas. Anker (1978) argued that when land is the main source of income a positive relation between desired family size and income results. Therefore the effect of income on fertility preference may differ according to the historical and geographical context of the study.

It has been suggested that the economic returns from children to their parents diminish gradually when parents income increases (Leibenstein, 1957). Higher income and the ability to save money may reduce the economic advantages of having large families. Many studies suggest negative relationships between the economic benefits of having children and parents' income (Caldwell, 1978).

Blake (1968) argued that desired family size was determined mainly by social norms, not by the economic characteristics of the household and community, thus, ignoring the fact that economic variables (which affect consumer behaviour) may ultimately affect the social norms themselves. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the

effect of economic factors such as income will appear more clearly in the long run.

1.12.2 Women's employment

The relationships between fertility and female employment have been explored in numerous studies. The direction of the relationship is still unclear (Singh and Casterline, 1985). For example, in societies where there is a high female participation in the labour force, there will be low fertility levels. On the other hand, lower fertility may attract women to share in the labour force. However, the relationships and their form may be decided by variables such as income, education and cultural norms (Singh and Casterline, 1985). Therefore, several relationships between women's work and fertility are possible. Collver and Longlois (1962) argued that women's employment has an adverse effect on fertility. Mincer (1963) found that an increase in women's wages tended to reduce fertility. Having many children or giving priority to childbearing is considered by many to be an obstacle to women's employment (Sweet, 1982).

It has been recognized that the fertility preferences of working women vary according to the nature of the work, their place of residence and social class (Abdalla, 1987). Urban jobs may actually facilitate and subsidise childbearing. The inverse relationship between women's work and fertility preferences in urban areas is clearer than in rural areas (Abdallah, 1987) mainly as a result

of:-

(1) Children's costs being different, where the extended family can look after children and replace working women in their domestic duties (Farooq, 1985).

(2) Urban jobs require highly qualified women (Farooq, 1985).

(3) Agricultural work usually requires a large family size, since children can contribute to their families income at an early age, especially in societies which are characterized with an intensive labour force.

(4) Parents' aspirations to raise the level of their children's education and their standards of living. This effect may be stronger in urban areas than in rural ones.

In general, working women have lower fertility than non-working women (U.N. 1985). El-Khorazaty (1985) found that the mean number of additional children desired is higher for non-working wives for families with no more than two surviving children. This means that working women will be satisfied with fewer children as compared to non-working wives.

The inverse relationship between women's employment and fertility is often absent in developing countries mainly as a result of the mode of operation of the family system (men only responsible to household income) and cultural norms (more tolerant with younger and older to work) and the small percentage of women who participate in the labour force as compared with that in developed

countries (Goldstein, 1972). Some researchers attribute the low proportion of working women in developing societies to the lack of opportunities in waged sectors of the economy and also to cultural norms (Sultan, 1986).

The effect of women's work on fertility or desired number of children may be indirect. While women's work increases family income it also leads to an exchange of ideas with other people. It emancipates women from traditional norms, and facilitates better communication, greater equality of participation in family decision making processes, and it increases womens freedom inside and outside their homes. It also makes them more secure and economically independent (Hagar, 1987).

1.12.3 Education

Wives' education is expected to be one of the most important variables shaping household fertility, decision making and behaviour (Cleland and Rodriguez, 1988). Tobin (1976) has argued that a husband's education reflects more accurately the socio-economic status of the household.

Education is generally negatively associated with desired family size and fertility levels (Gomes, 1984). Farooq (1985) has argued that any increase in parents educational level will lead to a decrease in the number of children desired. Cho (1978) found differences in the desired family size in five Asian countries; Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand. Cho found that women with poor educational levels tended to have larger

families than women with more education.

Education influences the main components of fertility behaviour. Education is positively associated with the supply side, since maternal education increases the probability of child survival (Campbell, 1974) through its effect in increasing family income (Pust et al., 1985) and in helping towards an awareness of the need for better health care, nutrition and child care. On the other hand, educated women are less motivated to resort to breastfeeding thus increasing their chance of pregnancy.

On the demand side, parents' educational levels have a negative influence on the number of children wanted (Willis, 1973). The influence of education may be direct or indirect. For example, education raises couples aspirations towards achieving higher living standards and to achieving better education for their own children (Ryder, 1983). Education increases the relative cost of children (Becker, 1965). Education may also result in a shift in couples' tastes and increase their demand for consumer goods. Education may weaken kinship socio-economic relations, thus, decreasing the expected benefit from children (Gomes, 1984). It will also reduce the contribution of child labour in their early years. An increase in women's educational levels may be positively associated with attitudes towards the use of contraceptives which ultimately may affect fertility levels.

Tobin (1976) has argued that less education for women may mean that they give greater intrinsic value to the

maternal role, while higher education may make them more likely to use contraceptives and become more successful in family planning. On the other hand, women with higher education are likely to desire higher educational levels for their children (Gomes, 1984). Duesenberry (1960) has pointed out that families with higher incomes are likely to encourage the attainment high level of education for their children than do parents with a lower income. Therefore, it is possible to argue that children's education may be used as a direct measure of children's quality and cost.

1.12.4 Place of residence

Differences in the desired family size can be attributed to the place of residence, where urbanization has a substantially negative effect on the total number of children preferred. Knodel and Prachuabmoh (1973) found that in Thailand urban women desire less number of children than rural and semi-urban women. Differences in the desired family size can also be found in the urban area according to social classes. Dhindsa (1986) has found that people from the lower classes tended to have higher fertility levels than people from the higher classes. Pullum (1980) attributed the differences in desired family size after controlling for the actual family size to place of residence among women in Sri Lanka.

Regional differences in fertility preferences can therefore be attributed to spatial variations in socio-economic development reflecting differences in couples'

characteristics, to difference in life styles and to geographical variations in the constraints and influences on fertility attitudes which have been outlined by Compton and Coward (1989), and shown earlier in this thesis in Figure 1.2.

## 1.13 Conclusion

This literature review has sought to highlight the most important recent research findings to emerge on fertility behaviour. It has shown that it is much easier to theorise and schematise relationships between on the one hand social economic political and physical environmental factors and on the other hand fertility attitudes and behaviour, than it is to establish empirical research findings about these relationships which have widespread applicability. Most generalisations about the interactions between these forces are culturally and historically specific. In particular sweeping generalisations about factors affecting fertility behaviour in the developing countries should be avoided given the diversity of demographic and cultural contexts of these countries. In elaborating on this theme this thesis now turns to the specific cultural and historical context of fertility trends amongst the Arab population of the West Bank in the 20th century.

# CHAPTER 2

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WEST BANK

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present some of the main demographic characteristics of the West Bank population in the aftermath of the 1967 war when the whole area came under Israeli control. Prior to doing this, however, it is necessary to review some of the problems facing demographic research in the West Bank. It has never been an easy task to assemble reliable statistics on the Palestinian population. The problems can be summarised as follows:-

1. After the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, and the subsequent economic and political developments in the Arab East, a large segment of the Palestinian people were scattered beyond the borders of their homeland. Most of them settled in neighbouring Arab countries. Estimates show that in 1980 more than 3 million Palestinians lived outside Palestine, and could not obtain "family reunfication permits" and were consequently prevented from returning to their native homes (Abu-Lughod, 1982). Table 2.1 and figure 2.1 show different estimates of the Palestinian distribution over the world in 1980. Several of the Arab host countries did not publish separate statistics on the Palestinian population. The most confused situations are found in the East Bank of Jordan and to a lesser extent in Lebanon. In both these areas

absorption of the Palestinians, through inter-marriage and naturalization has been extensive (Hill, 1983).

2. The fact that some Palestinians have obtained citizenship of other countries is a major problem for demographic analysis of the situation. Jordan provides a good example of this. In the early fifties, the Jordanian government granted its citizenship to every Palestinian residing in the West Bank, including those in refugee camps in both the East and West Bank. The Jordanian decision was taken after an official link was made in 1950 between the West Bank and Trans Jordan under the name of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Henceforth, many Arab and non-Arab countries classified the Palestinians as Jordanian, simply because they travelled on Jordanian passports and reported their nationality as being Jordanian. This has been one major source of big differences between different statistical estimes.

3. Reliability and validity of data. Most demographic data depends on estimates. Some biased data may be attributed to political aims. For example, it is easy to point to this reason as explaining some of the differences between the Arab and Israeli estimates of the size of the Palestinian population. There are, however, differences within Israel with regard to official estimates of the size of the Palestinian population. For example, in 1980 the Israeli Central

Bureau of Statistics released a population estimate of the West Bank population as being 704,000 while the Israeli Interior Ministry gave an estimate of 871,000 (Sabatello, 1983).

4. Since 1967 only one census has been conducted in the occupied territories. The census was carried out under curfew conditions and was designed to constitute the basis for issuing identity cards to the inhabitants of the areas. No subsequent census has been taken although two full population censuses have been carried out in Israel in the years 1972 and 1983. All Israeli sources exclude East Jerusalem (70,000 inhabitants in 1967) from their analysis. This was formally annexed to Israel directly after the occupation.

5. Because of military rule it is difficult and sometimes impossible for any Arab researcher from the occupied territories to obtain permission to conduct a survey in the occupied territories. Also the Israeli authorities do not allow researchers to study or even to look at vital registration or migration records. Therefore, most researchers do their surveys illegally and without permission from the Israeli authorities.

6. In the past two years during the Palestinian Intifada (uprising), conducting surveys in the occupied territories has become extremely difficult because of road blocks, military checkpoints, curfews and travel bans. In addition, Palestinians in the territory have become even more sensitive to giving information to

Table 2.1

Palestinian distribution by place of residence.

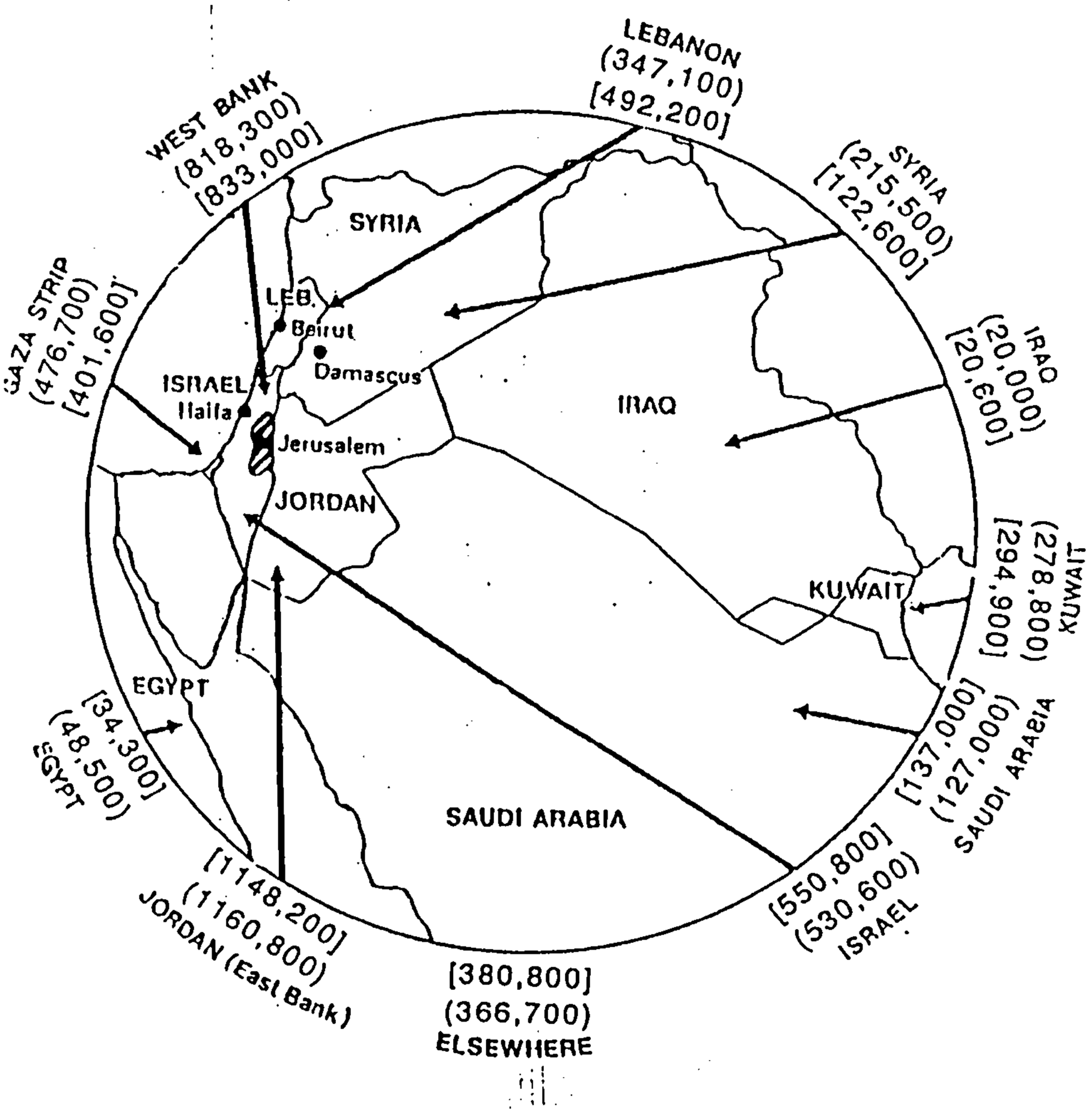
| PLACE OF RESIDENCE | ABU-LUGHOD ESTIMATES 1980 IN THOUSANDS | % | *PLO ESTIMATES 1980 IN THOUSANDS | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **West Bank | 818.3 | 18.6 | 833.0 | 18.4 |
| Gaza strip | 476.7 | 10.9 | 401.6 | 8.9 |
| Israel | 530.6 | 12.1 | 550.8 | 12.2 |
| Jordan | 1160.8 | 26.4 | 1148.2 | 25.4 |
| Syria | 215.5 | 4.9 | 122.6 | 4.9 |
| Lebanon | 347.1 | 7.9 | 492.2 | 10.9 |
| Kuwait | 278.8 | 6.4 | 294.9 | 6.5 |
| Iraq | 20.0 | 0.5 | 20.6 | 0.5 |
| Libya | 23.0 | 0.5 | 23.8 | 0.5 |
| Egypt | 48.5 | 1.1 | 34.3 | 0.8 |
| Saudi Arabia | 127.0 | 2.9 | 137.0 | 3.0 |
| U.A.E. | 34.7 | 0.8 | 37.0 | 0.9 |
| Qatar | 22.5 | 0.5 | 24.0 | 0.6 |
| Other Arab Countries | 48.2 | 1.1 | 51.0 | 1.1 |
| U.S.A. | 102.0 | 2.3 | 105.0 | 2.3 |
| Rest of the world | 136.3 | 3.1 | 140.0 | 3.1 |
| TOTAL | 4,390.0 | 100 | 4,516.0 | 100 |

Sources: Palestinian Liberation Organisation, 1982, p32.
Abu-Lughod, 1982, p184.

*PLO: Palestine Liberation Organisation
The percentage was calculated by the researcher.
*Excluding East Jerusalem (118,000 inhabitants in 1980 according to Central Bureau of Statistics).

researchers because of their fear of them being either Israeli intelligence or being in some way politically motivated.

Figure 2.1: Distribution of the Palestinian Population in in the World (1980).




( ) Abu-Lughod Estimates (1982) p184.

[ ] PLO Estimates (1982) p32.

## 2.2 Population Growth and Political Change 1900-1948

Since some of the current population trends in the West Bank derive from and have been affected by the pre 1967 patterns, it is worthwhile dealing briefly with events dating back to before the Israeli occupation.

It is very difficult to obtain reliable information on population changes among the Arab Palestinian population during the late Ottoman empire. The natural increase of the Palestinian population appears to have been modest through the second half of the nineteenth century and probably up to the end of the Ottoman period. It may be assumed that mortality and fertility rates were at a very high level and that fertility levels varied very little until 1900. Estimates indicate that between the middle of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the first world war the Arabs in Palestine grew slowly from 500,000 to 600,000 (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1979).

According to Israeli sources (Israeli Statistical Abstract 1950/1951) the total number of Jewish people in Palestine in 1882 numbered approximately 24,000. This number doubled in eighteen years to reach 50,000 at the beginning of this century. Most of the increase came from the first immigration wave from Russia (Abu-Lughod, 1982).

According to the Ottoman census of 1914 which is summarised in the census of Palestine (1922), the total population numbered 689,272 of whom about 60,000 were Jewish. They constituted about 8.8% of the total population of Palestine.

During the first world war, population decreased, Jewish immigration halted, and the Ottoman government expelled 30,000 Russian Jews as a policy against the Russian government. This factor, together with a higher mortality rate due to epidemics and famines, caused a sharp decline in the size of the Jewish population to about 57,000 in 1918 (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1979).

Different demographic forces account for the growth of the Jewish and Arab population in Palestine in the post war period. Net immigration accounted for increase amongst the Jews, while natural increase led to growth of the Arab population. Ehrlich (1980) attributed 82% of the Jewish population growth between 1919-1923 to the immigration waves.

The relative and absolute size of the Arab and the Jewish population in Palestine was a central issue from the beginning of the British mandate until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The British authorities in Palestine conducted two censuses, the first one in October 1922 and the second in November 1931. Besides the British censuses, there was also civil registration which recorded births, deaths and migration. Population estimates for Palestine, based on data from the censuses and from the estimate of the civil registration were published annually until the year 1945.

According to the first British census of 1922, the total population at the beginning of mandate was about

757,500 of which 668,000 were Arabs and 84,000 where Jews. The majority of the Arab population were mulsims constituting 88%, Arab Christians made up 11% while Druze constituted only 1%. These percentages did not change significantly during the period of the British mandate (Abu-Lughod, 1982).

During the British mandate, Jewish population growth in Palestine was very high as a result of the mass waves of Jewish immigration in response to the activities of Zionist agencies. Jewish immigration to Palestine became the central issue in the emerging conflict between the Arabs and Jews during and after the British mandate. The Jewish population grew at an annual average rate of 9% during the years 1922-1948. Approximately three quarters of this growth may be attributed to immigration. While the Arab population did not grow as rapidly, but rather at an average of 2.7% per annum at the same period (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1979).

A survey of Palestine in 1946 indicated that crude death rates had fallen from 30.2 per thousand in 1927/29 to 18.7 per thousand in 1942/44. This trend may be exaggerated, since substantial under-registration of deaths at the earlier date seems probable. The decline in mortality rate was accompanied by an increase in life expectancy at birth from 37.5 in 1927/29 to 50 years in 1942/44 (Survey of Palestine, 1946). Bachi (1977) has estimated life expectancy of the Arabs in Palestine in 1926/27 at 37.9 years for the females and 39.1 years for

males.

The distribution of the population in Palestine by region and religion for the period 1922-1945 makes it clear that muslims constituted the vast majority in most regions. The Jewish percentage increased rapidly especially in some regions. For example, the proportion of Jews increased in Jafa-Tel Aviv from less than 22% of the total population to about 50% in 1931 and continued to increase to reach 70% in 1948. In 1931 about 68% of the Jewish population was settled in the Jafa-Tel Aviv and Jerusalem belt. 65,000 Jews (one third of the Jewish population) were settled in Jafa-Tel Aviv and about 55,000 in Jerusalem according to the 1931 census.

Jewish immigration took place in three main periods:-

1) 1924-1926 as a result of intensive Zionist propaganda in the wake of the Balfour declaration in 1917 and assisted by the economic crisis in the West.
2) 1933-1939 because of Nazism and anti-semitism in Germany.
3) 1943-1948 with the formation of the Jewish legion in 1944 which became the nucleus of the Israeli army (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1979).

The 1931 census indicated that net immigration of Jews between 1922-1931 was about 60,000 compared with a total increase of 90,000 in that period. One third of the population increase was considered to be a result of Jewish natural increase. Jewish immigration reached its peak in

the year 1925 when 34,000 Jews entered Palestine (Abu-Lughod, 1982). By 1931 the total number of Jews in Palestine was 174,000, of whom only 42% were born in Palestine and about 80% of the total Jewish migrants population were born in Europe.

On the other hand, the 1931 census shows that the Arab population's growth can be attributed mainly to the natural increase with the crude birth rate at 52.2 per thousand and the crude death rate at 26 per thousand. As a result, the natural growth rate was 27 per thousand. The census also indicates that more than 95% of the Arab population were born in Palestine.

Between 1932-1936 the size of the Jewish population doubled as a result of intensive immigration involving 172,000 people. By contrast, natural increase only involved about 26,000 people. By the end of 1936 the Jewish population constituted 28% of the total population of Palestine as compared with only 16% in 1922.

At the end of 1943, the statistical department in Palestine indicated that the total population had reached 1,676,571 of this total about half a million were Jews (30%), while by the end of 1946 the total population increased to reach 1,887,214. Of this total, only 31% were Jews. Freidlander and Goldscheider (1979) estimated the proportion of the Jewish population on the eve of the declaration of State of Israel as 34.5%. It is believed that illegal Jewish immigration reached its peak in 1947, the last year of British mandate.

As a result of the 1948 war, Israeli forces occupied 77% of what had been the British mandated territory of Palestine. The Arab population of this area declined sharply from about 900,000 to about 130,000 including 66,000 Bedouin in the southern part of Palestine (Abu-Lughod, 1971; U.N. 1950). Most of these people lived in rural districts and in the small towns of Northern Israel between Haifa and Lake Tiberias.

The distribution of Palestinian refugees in 1948 was as follows: the West Bank 39%, Gaza Strip 26%, Lebanon 14%, Syria 10%, Jordan 10% and Egypt 1%. In terms of their religion about 93% of refugees were Muslims and 7% were Christians, while most of the Druze remained in their lands (Kossaifi, 1980).

Today the recent statistics of UNRWA (1987) indicated that about 2.2 million Palestinians registered as refugees. These Palestinians are scattered throughout Jordan (East Bank), Lebanon, Syria, Gaza Strip and West Bank. These countries were given first priorities by refugees mainly because the majority of them preferred to be close to their relatives and because of the widespread belief that they will return to in their homes in the nearest future.

Table 2.2

Factors influencing the demographic change of the total population of Palestine (by religion) 1922-1945

| | RELIGION | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Muslim | Christian | Druze | Jew | Total |
| 23.10.22 | 598,177 | 71,464 | 7,617 | 83,790 | 761,048 |
| 31.12.45 | 1,101,565 | 139,285 | 14,858 | 554,329 | 1,810,037 |
| Overall increase | 503,338 | 67,821 | 7,241 | 470,539 | 1,048,989 |
| Natural increase | 491,855 | 48,724 | 6,493 | 129,989 | 677,061 |
| Net migration | 20,533 | 19,097 | 748 | 340,550 | 380,928 |
| Total increase % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Natural increase % | 96 | 72 | 90 | 28 | 64 |
| Net migration % | 4 | 28 | 10 | 72 | 36 |

These numbers exclude the British army forces in Palestine but include nomadic people in Negev desert.
Percentage was calculated by researcher.
Source: Statistical Abstract of Palestine 1946, p17.

Table 2.3

Population composition: proportion of the total population by religious group, 1922-1945.

| | Muslim | Christian | Druze | Jew | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oct. 1922 | 74.9 | 11.01 | 1.18 | 12.91 | 649,048 |
| July 1926 | 71.5 | 9.43 | 1.08 | 18.44 | 810,885 |
| Nov. 1931 | 71.7 | 9.20 | 1.04 | 18.06 | 966,761 |
| Dec. 1936 | 61.24 | 8.35 | 0.87 | 29.54 | 1,300,139 |
| Dec. 1940 | 59.63 | 8.16 | 0.85 | 31.36 | 1,477,977 |
| Dec. 1945 | 59.37 | 7.99 | 0.85 | 31.79 | 1,743,484 |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Palestine, 1946, p14.

Table 2.4 shows that almost all of refugee camps which were erected by the UNRWA are located in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The refugee camps accommodate nearly 35% of the total Palestinian refugees. However, most refugees who are better off financially rather live in cities and not in refugee camps, taking into account the fact that most refugees are situated in areas adjacent to cities.

Most researchers define Palestinian refugees as the people who registered and carried a UNRWA Registration card (United Nation Relief and Working Agency). The UNRWA defines a Palestinian refugee for operational purposes as those people or their descendents whose normal residence was in Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, and who as a result of that conflict lost both their home and means of livelihood (Rowley, 1984).

Table 2.4

Distribution of registered refugee population in 1987.

| | Jordan (East Bank) | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Lebananon | Syria | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Registered refugees | 845,542 | 373,586 | 445,397 | 278,609 | 257,989 | 2,201,123 |
| Percentage | 38.4 | 17 | 20.2 | 12.7 | 11.7 | 100 |
| Lived in camps | 208,716 | 94,824 | 244,416 | 143,809 | 75,208 | 766,973 |
| Percentage | 24.7 | 25.4 | 54.9 | 51.6 | 29.2 | 34.8 |
| No. of camps | 10 | 20 | 8 | 13 | 10 | 61 |

Source: UNRWA report, 1987, p23.
Percentage calculated by researcher.

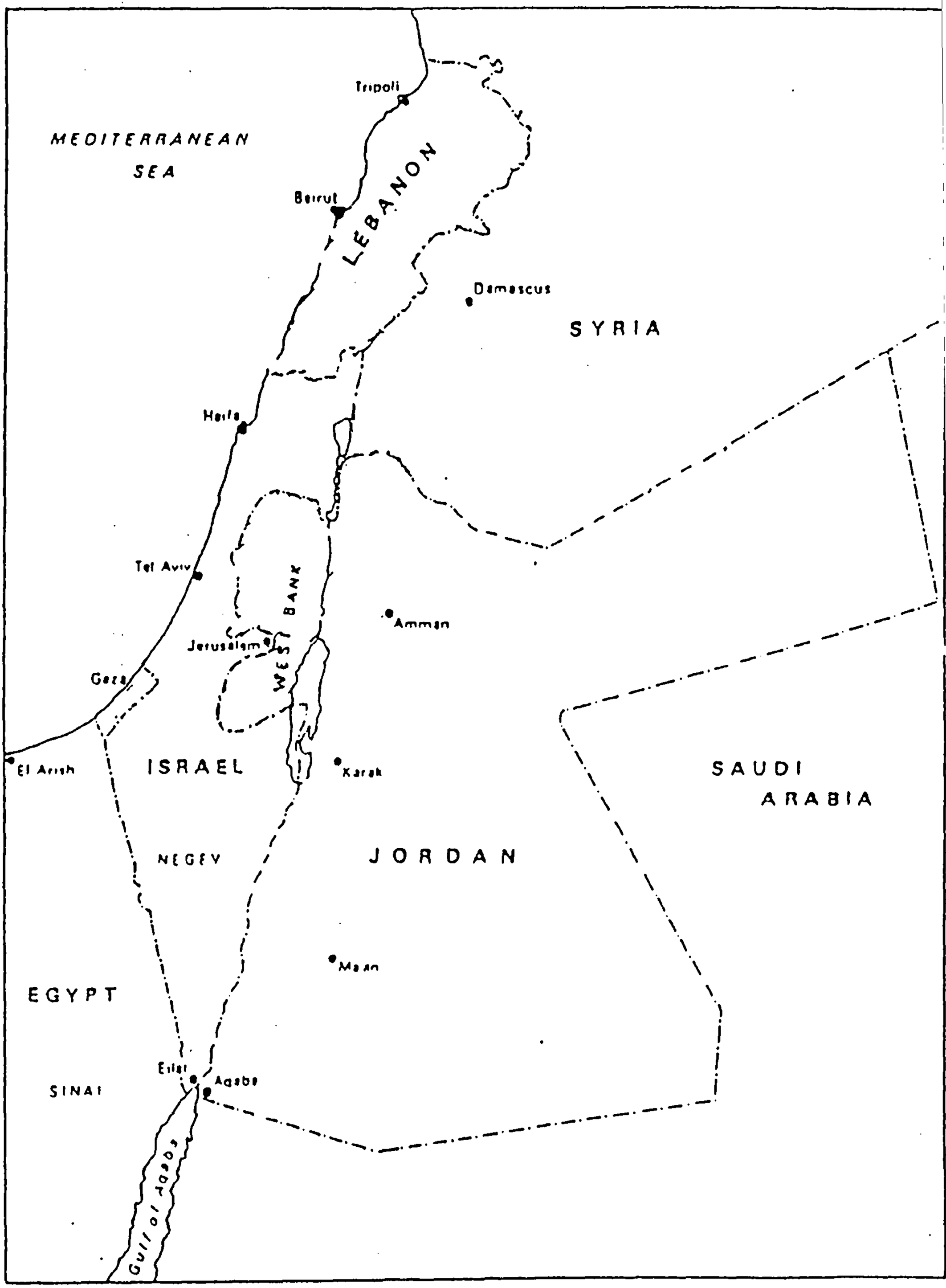
## 2.3 West Bank population between 1948-1967

The West Bank is the name which was given to most of the region of Palestine which was not occupied by the Israelis after the 1948 Arab Israeli war. The area of the West Bank covers 5,879 K.m. (Europa, 1988). In 1949 it was officially integrated with trans Jordan under the name of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, while the Gaza Strip (the other small part remained from Palestine) came under Egyption administration (see Figure 2.2).

The West Bank population is composed of two groups. First, pre 1948 refugees expelled from their lands as a result of the 1948 war. Second, long term residents of the West Bank before 1948. The main sources of demographic data in the period 1948-1967 when it was under Jordanian rule are: The first Jordanian census which was conducted in 1952 and the comprehensive Jordanian census of population and housing undertaken in November 1961.

When reviewing the demographic history of a population it is easy to lose sight of the major forces accounting for population changes, and to focus instead on the chronological sequence of specific geographical details. Prior to presenting these details, it is therefore insightful to identify the major forces explaining population change in the West Bank in the period 1948-1967. This should help the reader to distinguish "general forces" from particular detail.

Figure 2.2: General location map of the West Bank and its neighbours.



The history of demographic development has been dichotomized in the West Bank between periods of warfare and social unrest on the one hand, and periods of relative tranquility and continuity on the other. Later in this chapter details of the political events under-pinning these periods are discussed, but first it is useful to list the different demographic regimes operating in these two types of "environments".

(1) Troubled periods. After the 1948 and 1967 wars a great number of Palestinian people left their homes as a result of alien occupation. More than 700,000 people were forced to leave Palestine during the 1948 war (U.N. 1950, Abu-Lughod, 1971) as a direct result of the creation of the Israeli state. Directly after the 1967 war around 170,000 Palestinian people (one fifth of the total West Bank population) emigrated to Jordan and other neighbouring countries as a result of the Israeli take over of the territory (Schmelz et al., 1977; Kossaifi, 1985). The role of political factors in affecting migration is clearest during troubled periods, but this does not mean that the influence of the political situation disappears in relatively peaceful periods.

(2) Periods of relative tranquility. These represent the periods of the early 1950s until the eve of the June 1967 war. Voluntary migration took place. It was characterised as highly selective in terms of the age and sex of migrants. The average net migration rate of around 25 per thousand per year meant that the size of West Bank

population remained almost constant. It rose from 742,000 in 1952 to only 804,000 on the eve of the 1967 war. This meant that net emigration had the effect of cancelling most population growth (Sabatello, 1983). The motives behind this kind of migration were mainly economic, and reflected the fact that the West Bank economy lacked jobs for both West Bankers and the refugees who had been driven there from their land in 1948. Equally it reflects imbalanced development and investment between the East and West Banks of Jordan, in the period after the West Bank became part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The favourable economic and social conditions prevailing in the East Bank and Gulf states, particularly in Kuwait, encouraged the people to leave the West Bank and to seek jobs in these countries.

Having made these general comments it now becomes possible to return to a review of the detailed chronology of West Bank population growth. The total population of the West Bank in 1949 was approximately 400,000 persons. This number increased rapidly to reach 742,000 within three years. The annual rate of increase of the West Bank population for the period 1949-1952 was therefore a remarkable 20.6% (Department of Statistics in Jordan, 1963). Most of the increase came from the large number of Palestinian immigrants in the aftermath of the 1948 war. The total number of immigrants was about 250,000, while 160,000 settled in the Gaza Strip (Benvenisti, 1987).

The population of the West Bank increased from

742,300 in 1952 to 805,400 in 1961. The average annual growth rate for this period was only 0.9%. This was mainly a result of the great number of people who chose to become labour emigrants to the Gulf states, especially amongst the refugees.

The underlying reasons for leaving the West Bank were the poor level of economic development, the difficulties in finding jobs in the local labour market and the deterioration of living standards. At the same time, favourable economic and social factors in the East Bank and Gulf states, particularly in Kuwait, were considered to be the driving forces behind several waves of emigration from the West Bank (Kossaifi, 1985).

Table 2.5 indicates that the number of emigrants from the West Bank during the period 1952-1967 was around 400,000 persons. The result of this emigration was the relatively slow growth of the West Bank population. The total number of people increased by about 60,000 over 16 years, or an annual growth rate of 0.51%. The table also reveals that emigration was more intensive in the early 1960s than in the 1950s. The annual growth rate during the period 1961-1967 was nearly zero.

According to the Jordanian census of 1961, the crude birth rate in the early 1960's was around 45 per thousand in the West Bank, while the crude death rate was around 18 per thousand.

Table 2.5

Palestinian migrants from the West Bank.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Actual No. of residents | Estimated population resulting from Natural Increase (without migration | Emigrants since last enumeration (2-1) | Estimated annual growth rate since last enumeration |
| 1951 | 742,289 | - | - | - |
| 1961 | 801,365 | 952,900 | 210,600 | 0.83 |
| 1967 | *803,600 | 955,600 | 154,200 | 0.05 |

Source: Kossaifi, 1985, p93.

* 1967 estimates back to 31st May 1967.
** Annual growth rate of 2.7% was applied for the period 1952-1961, 3.2% for the period 1961-1967.

The selectivity of migration from the West Bank affected the population structure (age and sex). Most emigrants were from the young, most active age groups. Female labour migration was more difficult as a result of the norms and customs of Islamic society. Nevertheless, even in the most conservative segments of West Bank society, female emigration occurred, as wives and children moved following the initial emigration of their husbands. Through a comparative analysis of the Jordanian census of 1961 and 1967 conducted by Israel, this researcher concluded that about 40% (50,000 to 57,000) of the emigrants were women.

The demographic development of the Palestinians in the West Bank therefore reflects the way they were treated

not only by the Israelis but also by their Arab neighbours. Kossaifi (1980) has suggested that the Palestinians in the West Bank suffered from a policy of "Jordanization". This involved the concentration of investment and economic projects in the East Bank. This policy has affected the socio-economic character and prosperity of the West Bank, and consequently had both direct and indirect influences on demographic variables and socio-economic development levels. This, amongst other factors, helps to explain why the West Bank population declined between 1952 and 1961 from being 55.8% to being 43.0% respectively of the total population of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

## 2.4 West Bank population after the Israeli occupation

In the wake of June 1967, when the West Bank came under Israeli occupation, considerable qualitative and quantitative changes took place in the Palestinian population of the area. For instance, the voluntary migration was replaced by forced migration and the migrants who left the West Bank could no longer return when they wished without entry permits from the Israeli authorities. Moreover, all West Bankers who were outside the territories prior to the 1967 Arab Israeli war were not allowed to return and were forced to stay abroad. This section aims to investigate the important changes which took place with regard to West Bank population since 1967. Aspects such as population size, structure, fertility and mortality, migration, labour force, and Jewish settlement in the West

Bank will be discussed and analysed.

### 2.4.1 Population size

Most contemporary data on the size of the West Bank population are based on estimates and statistical models and not on census information. No census has been carried out since 1967. Current population estimates by age and sex are prepared by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. However, de facto annual migration balances and estimates of mortality can be obtained from model life tables which are published on an annual basis.

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics the West Bank population had reached 836,000 people by 1986. This total excludes the Jewish settlers in the West Bank and the Arab population of East Jerusalem. This figure also does not include 150,000 holders of West Bank identity cards who are residing abroad whose papers are maintained at exit stations. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that the total population of the West Bank could exceed one million people.

Table 2.6 reveals that it took until 1985 for the West Bank population to surpass the population size achieved prior to the invasion in May 1967, when 803,600 people lived in the West Bank. Following the invasion an estimated 218,000 people emigrated between June and September 1967 (Kossaifi, 1985). This exodus reduced the population to only 586,000. The emigration of West Bankers continued after that date but on a smaller scale (Table 2.6).

The balance of natural population increase and net emigration in the 20 years that were to follow saw the West Bank population increase once again by about 250,000 people. This meant that the population increased by 42.7% within 20 years. The annual average growth rate was about 2%, while the average level of net migration for that period was about 8,500 people per annum, compared with an average level of natural increase of about 20,000 people per annum.

Examination of annual growth rates reveals considerable changes from year to year. In the period 1968-1970 it stood at only 1.7% per annum, from 1970-1980 at 1.87%. The rate increased gradually to reach 2.14% in 1980-1986, while the maximum recorded was in the period 1983-1986 when the annual growth rate was 2.78%. This meant that the annual growth rate and natural increase were closer to each other.

Comparing this annual growth rate with that during the period of the Jordanian regime is interesting. Between 1952 and 1961 the average annual growth rate was only 0.9%, while under the Israeli occupation the average annual growth rate is 1.89%. It is clear that the rate under Israeli occupation is two times greater that the rate of the Jordanian period. The reason may be attributed mainly to the fact that during Jordanian rule, West Bankers were free to leave the West Bank and return whenever they felt it appropriate, while lots of restrictions have subsequently been imposed on the Palestinians by the

Israeli authorities.

Table 2.6

West Bank population estimates and source of population growth.

| YEAR | Population at the end of period | Annual growth (%) | Net migration thousands | Natural increase thousands |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1967 | 585.9 | - | 13(2) | 3(2) |
| 1968 | 583.1 | -0.48 | 15.8 | 13 |
| 1969 | 597.9 | 2.54 | 1.3 | 13.5 |
| 1970 | 607.8 | 1.66 | 5.0 | 14.9 |
| 1971 | 622.6 | 2.43 | 2.5 | 17.3 |
| 1972 | 633.5 | 1.75 | 7.3 | 18.1 |
| 1973 | 652.4 | 2.90 | 0.3 | 18.7*(18.6) |
| 1974 | 669.7 | 2.65 | 2.8 | 20.1 |
| 1975 | 675.2 | 0.82 | 15.1 | 20.6 |
| 1976 | 683.3 | 1.20 | 14.4 | 22.5 |
| 1977 | 695.7 | 1.81 | 10.2 | 22.7*(22.6) |
| 1978 | 708.0 | 1.77 | 9.4 | 21.6*(21.7) |
| 1979 | 718.6 | 1.50 | 12.6 | 23.3*(23.2) |
| 1980 | 724.3 | 0.79 | 17.3 | 22.9*(23.0) |
| 1981 | 731.8 | 1.00 | 15.7 | 23.2 |
| 1982 | 749.3 | 2.39 | 7.9 | 24.5*(25.4) |
| 1983 | 771.8 | 3.00 | 2.7 | 25.2 |
| 1984 | 793.4 | 2.80 | 5.8 | 27.4 |
| 1985 | 815.5 | 2.78 | 5.0 | 27.1 |
| 1986 | 836.0 | 2.51 | - | - |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1987.
(1) Calculated by researcher.
(2) From September to December, 1967.
*( ) Corrected by researcher.

### 2.4.2 Fertility and mortality

The source of a population's natural increase arises from the balance of fertility and mortality. The fertility rate of the West Bank population has slightly changed over the last generation. From data reconstructed from the Jordanian census 1961 and the Israeli census 1967, it may be concluded that there is no evidence to suggest any substantial decline in fertility from the initial high levels recorded amongst Arabs during the period of the British mandate. On the contrary, it appears that fertility probably increased during the 1930s and 1940s and has continued to increase since 1948 (Friedlander and Goldscheider, 1979). This trend can also be found in other developing countries, when they start to experience improvement in their health services and the general standard of living (Heer, 1983).

Table 2.7 shows that the crude birth rate increased from 43.9 per thousand in 1968 to reach 45.4 per thousand in 1975. After that date, the crude birth rate decreased to 42.1 per thousand in 1980 and to about 40 per thousand in 1986. This may reflect a change in age structure of the population rather than any reduction in underlying fertility levels. This view is also substantiated by examining the total number of births. There is an increase in the absolute number of births from 25,650 in 1968 to 30,400 in 1980. But in 1985 and 1986 the number decreased to 33,238 and 33,035 respectively.

The Jordanian census in 1961 reveals that West Bank fertility was very high in the pre census period. The average level for all West Bank women in the reproductive ages in 1961 was 7.5. This number was close to the total fertility rate obtained through calculations of registered births for the years surrounding the census (Hill, 1983). This rate is an indication of the high levels in the reproductive age cohorts of couples in the West Bank. Most studies of the demography of the West Bank reveal a significant change in the fertility pattern since 1978. For example, the total fertility rate was around 7.5 for the period 1967-1978 and this rate decreased to 7.2 for the period 1978-1981. After 1981 the total fertility rate dropped to slightly less than 7 children (Hill, 1983; Sabatello, 1983; Benvenisti, 1986).

The change in fertility patterns has been accompanied by a shift in the peak age of childbearing from 20-29 to 30-39. This has probably been caused by a postponement in age of women at marriage. The fertility of women in the 20-39 age group contributed to about 83% of the total births in the occupied territories (Benvenisti, 1986). This reveals that childbearing is distributed over a wide range of age cohorts and that fertility control still has not reduced the number of births amongst older women to the extent which might have been expected.

Table 2.7

Live births by sex and place of birth, 1968-1986.

| | 1968 | 1975 | 1980 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 25,650 | 30,522 | 30,400 | 32,041 | 33,803 | 33,238 | 33,035 |
| Males | 13,342 | 15,890 | 15,490 | 16,598 | 17,444 | 17,289 | 17,100 |
| Females | 12,308 | 14,632 | 14,460 | 15,441 | 16,359 | 15,949 | 15,953 |
| Place of birth | | | | | | | |
| Hospital | 3,463 | 9,177 | 12,292 | 16,566 | 17,283 | 18,588 | 19,466 |
| Outside Hospital | 22,187 | 21,345 | 18,108 | 15,475 | 16,520 | 14,650 | 13,587 |
| % birth in Hospital | 13.5 | 30.1 | 40.4 | 51.7 | 51.1 | 55.9 | 58.9 |
| Birth rates per 1000 population | 43.9 | 45.4 | 42.1 | 42.3 | 43.0 | 41.3 | 40.0 |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1987, No. 38, Jerusalem.

Despite the poor coverage and quality of mortality data, not only during the British mandate and Jordanian regime, but also after 1967 (Israeli occupation), it is worth analysing the available data. According to the Jordanian census of 1961 the mortality rate of children under five years of age was still as high as 25%. By the mid sixties this had fallen to 21%. After 1967 the child mortality rate decreased slowly and was probably down to 10% in the mid 1970s (Hill, 1983). Estimates of the infant mortality rate during the first year of life in the 1960s are of the order of 15%. Thus the population of the West Bank which fell under Israeli occupation was distinguished

by a high mortality rate.

Surveys carried out during the 1970s by the Central Bureau of Statistics suggest that infant mortality rates (IMR) were about 100 per thousand in the mid 1970s. This level is contradictory with those deriving from vital registration sources, which usually give a lower rate as a result of incomplete registration. One factor which has helped to reduce IMR is the increasing percentage of births occurring in clinics and hospitals. This increased from 13.5% in 1968 to about 60% in 1986 as shown in table 2.7.

In spite of the decline in mortality rates in the West Bank, it is worth comparing the West Bank death rate with rates in Jordan which is very similar to the West Bank in most of its characteristics. Yossif (1982) indicates that the crude death rate in Jordan in 1976 was 9.1 per thousand while in the West Bank it was 12 per thousand in the same year. The differences between the West Bank and Jordan may be due to some factors such as differences in health services and the differences in age structure of the two populations.

### 2.4.3 Sex and age structure

All the current trends in the West Bank population are conducive to a "young" age structure. This type of age structure can be found in most of the Arab world with its high fertility levels. Table 2.8 shows that from 1967 to the early 1980's the percentage of people under the age of 15 diminished gradually from 49% in 1967 to 46.4 in 1982.

Since 1983 there has been a slight increase in the proportion of children under 15 years of age, which reached 46.6 in 1985. The general decrease in the 1970s in the proportion of the population under the age of 15 can be explained partly by the effect of age selective migration. In the 1980's the proportion of young people under the age of 15 became relatively stable as a result of a reduction of average net migration, especially after 1982. The proportion of the population in the age group 35-44 sharply declined from 9.0% to 5.3% during the period 1967-1985. Again the change may be because emigration became highly selective among some age groups, especially those of working age. Also, there is a gradual decrease in the proportion of elderly (65 years and over) to about half in the period 1967-1985. The reason behind this decrease may be attributed to the fact that most old aged people depend on their sons for their livelihood. Thus they prefer to live with them wherever they work even if they are working outside the West Bank. For the differences in population composition, see figure 2.3 and 2.4.

Figure 2.3: West Bank population by age and sex, 1967.

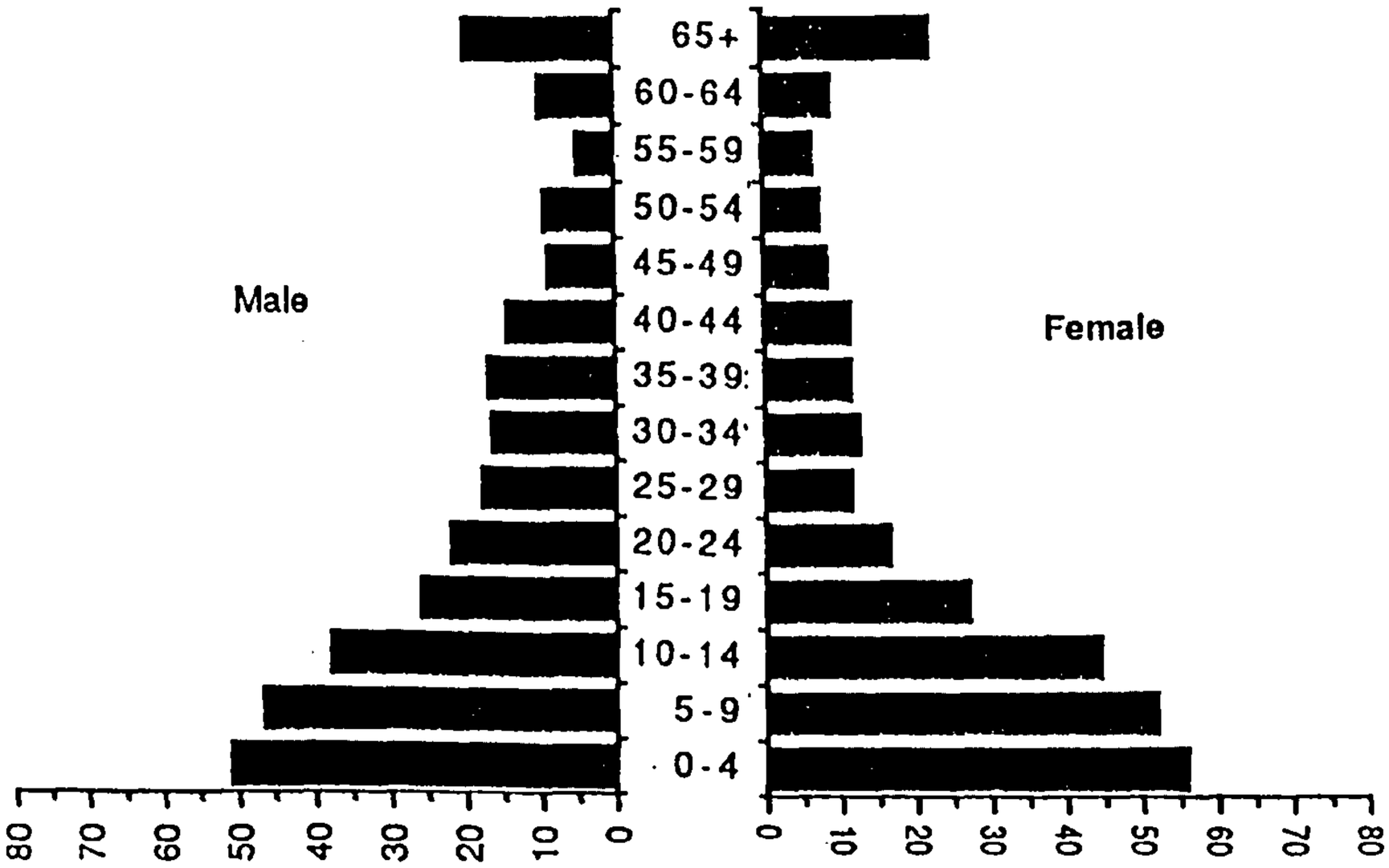



Figure 2.4: West Bank population by age and sex, 1985.

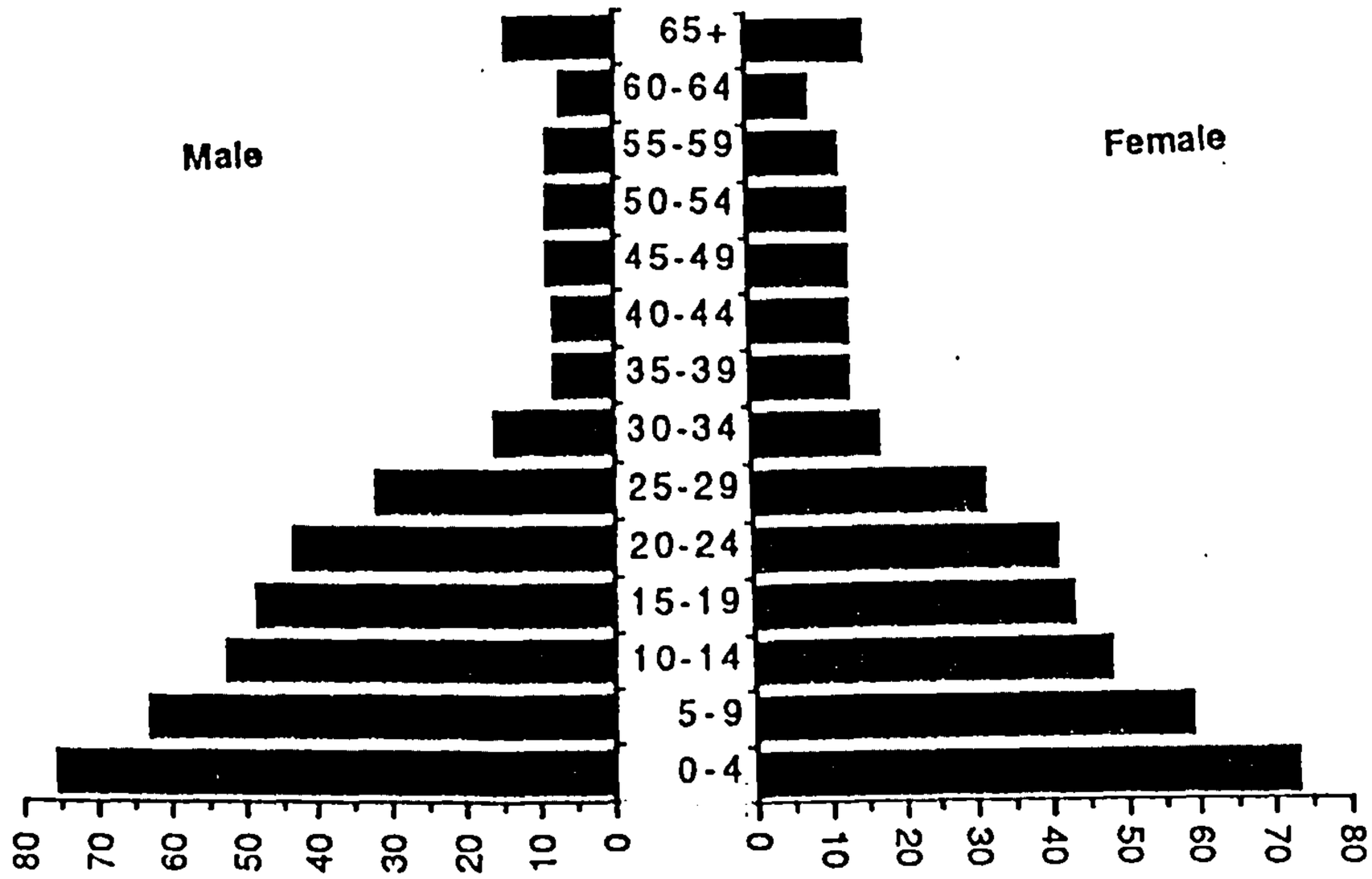


Table 2.8

Population estimates by age group 1967-1985 (percentages)

| Year | AGE GROUP 0-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total No thousands |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1967 | 49.0 | 8.6 | 6.3 | 9.7 | 9.0 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 6.5 | 585.9 |
| 1972 | 48.6 | 11.7 | 6.5 | 9.0 | 8.2 | 6.1 | 4.0 | 5.9 | 633.7 |
| 1975 | 47.2 | 12.9 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 7.0 | 6.6 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 695.8 |
| 1982 | 46.4 | 12.3 | 10.7 | 10.4 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 4.3 | 4.0 | 749.3 |
| 1983 | 46.4 | 12.1 | 10.7 | 11.3 | 5.4 | 6.0 | 4.4 | 3.8 | 771.8 |
| 1985 | 46.6 | 11.4 | 10.6 | 12.2 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 4.6 | 3.8 | 793.4 |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel (1986) No. 37, Jerusalem.

In contrast to the reduction in the proportion of some age groups (young and old people), the proportion in the middle aged cohorts of 15-39 years increased gradually between 1967 and 1985. This could be attributed to several factors:-

1. The Israeli labour market has attracted unskilled young people to work inside Israel while, for example, working in the Gulf States demanded more experience.
2. The current existence of Palestinian Universities and Colleges in the West Bank has provided students with study opportunities inside the territories.
3. Travel restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities mainly on young people has discouraged emigration.
4. The Universities and Colleges in Jordan and other Arab countries have restricted their conditions for

admissions of students from the West Bank as part of the Arab policy against the evacuation of the occupied territories.

5. Conscript services in Jordan, which began in 1977, discourage West Bank youths from settling or working in Jordan.

To estimate the influence of migration on the population's age groups, rough calculations were done in Table 2.9 to compare the size of an age group at the end of 1967 with the estimated size of the age group 15 years later. Almost all the differences can be attributed to migration.

It is clear from Table 2.9 that of the five selected age groups those in their late teens (15-19) in 1967 were most likely to subsequently participate in the migration outflows. At least one out of two in that age group left the West Bank. This is explained by their being of the optimum age for migrant labour in the mid 1970's when oil prices had risen rapidly.

In addition, an estimated 25% depletion in the older 25-29 and 30-34 age groups occurred because of emigration. This trend confirms the idea that after 1967 the migration movement became highly selective within some age groups.

Table 2.9

Survivorship ratio (%) of selected cohorts (1967-1982).

| Age in 1967 | No. of people at the end of 1967 (thousands) | Remained in 1982 (thousands) | *Survival rates (%) | Age in 1982 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3(2/1 x 100) | |
| 10-14 | 82.0 | 53.3 | 65.0 | 25-29 |
| 15-19 | 52.5 | 24.7 | 47.0 | 30-34 |
| 20-24 | 38.5 | 22.0 | 57.1 | 35-39 |
| 25-29 | 29.3 | 21.4 | 73.0 | 40-44 |
| 30-34 | 29.2 | 23.2 | 79.5 | 45-49 |

*Calculated by the researcher $\frac{t}{t - n} \times 100$

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1984.

According to Table 2.10, sex ratios reveal deficiences in the registration of females in the age groups 15 years and under. This is found frequently in Arab countries.

Table 2.10 shows the higher percentage of males in 1985 found in the age groups 0-29. Sex ratios show peak male dominance in the age band 15-19 years in 1985. The situation is reversed in the age group 35-39, when the proportion of females become higher. The sex ratio of men to 100 women reaches 63.1 in the age group 35-44.

Table 2.10

Population structure by sex and age, 1967, 1985 (1,000s).

| AGE GROUP | *1967 | | | **1985 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total |
| 0-4 | 56.0 | 51.2 | 107.2 | 72.7 | 75.3 | 148.0 |
| 5-9 | 52.0 | 46.9 | 98.9 | 58.5 | 63.1 | 121.6 |
| 10-14 | 44.4 | 37.6 | 82.0 | 48.2 | 52.1 | 100.3 |
| 15-19 | 26.9 | 25.6 | 52.5 | 43.1 | 48.2 | 91.3 |
| 20-24 | 16.4 | 22.1 | 38.5 | 41.1 | 43.1 | 84.2 |
| 25-29 | 11.6 | 17.7 | 29.3 | 31.2 | 32.1 | 63.3 |
| 30-34 | 12.7 | 16.5 | 29.2 | 17.0 | 16.1 | 33.1 |
| 35-39 | 11.4 | 16.8 | 28.2 | 13.0 | 8.2 | 21.2 |
| 40-44 | 11.3 | 14.3 | 25.6 | 13.0 | 8.2 | 21.2 |
| 45-49 | 8.5 | 8.8 | 17.3 | 12.0 | 9.0 | 22.0 |
| 50-54 | 7.5 | 9.2 | 16.7 | 13.0 | 9.0 | 22.0 |
| 55-59 | 6.5 | 5.2 | 11.7 | 12.2 | 9.0 | 21.0 |
| 60-64 | 9.2 | 9.9 | 19.1 | 7.9 | 7.1 | 15.0 |
| 65+ | 22.4 | 20.0 | 44.4 | 15.5 | 14.5 | 30.0 |
| TOTAL | 297.0 | 301.6 | 598.6 | 398.4 | 395.0 | 793.4 |

Source: *Population census in administrative territories, 1967, Jerusalem, 1968.

**Statistical Abstract of Israel, No. 37, Jerusalem, 1986.

When compared with data from 1967, the data indicates that the percentage of males in the early age groups (up to the 15-19 cohorts) is high, but the peak ratio of 118.1 occurs in the age group 10-14. The percentage of women

relative to the total population appears to use from the 20-24 age group. The big differences between the number of males and females which were found in the age group 25-29 years may be due to the large number of males in this age group who emigrated directly after the 1967 war.

The impact of population structure on the socio-economic conditions in the West Bank is represented here by the dependency ratio. Using the data in Table 2.10 makes it possible to calculate this ratio. This well known and frequently used ratio is an index relating the number of children under the age of 15 and the population aged 65 and over to the population of working age (15-64).

Table 2.11 indicates that the dependency ratio in 1967 and 1972 were very high as a result of heavy emigration of the working age population. After 1972 when the number of emigrants moderated, a steady decline in the dependency ratio occurred. The rate in the 1980's became around 100. However, the dependency ratio is only a theoretical measure of the economic potential of a population. There are many factors which affect the actual as opposed to the theoretical dependency ratio. These include:

1. The high level of fertility which seems to increase the ratio of the population under 15 years of age to the rest of the population.
2. The infant mortality rate. Reductions in the IMR mean more surviving infants and therefore more children.
3. Demand for higher education. Increased demand reduces

the proportion of the population entering the labour market at an early age. Thus the number of adults actually in waged employment may be much smaller than indicated by the dependency ratio (that is to say the true level of dependency is higher than indicated by the statistics).

4. Women's participation rates. The low ratio of women participating in the West Bank labour market as a result of cultural values and norms, reducing the de facto size of the West Bank labour force and hence increases the true ratio of dependents to waged employees or actively employed.

Table 2.11

Dependency ratios in the West Bank (1967-1985).

| | 1967 | 1972 | 1977 | 1982 | 1983 | 1985 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Dependency Ratio | 124.4 | 119.7 | 106.8 | 101.4 | 100.1 | 101.6 |

*Calculated by researcher from Table 2.10

### 2.4.4. Migration

Many forms of migration have left their scars on the West Bank population. Perhaps the first impact worth noting was when 250,000-280,000 refugees settled in the West Bank after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 (Sabatello, 1983). Subsequently migration started to redistribute the West Bank population to other neighbouring countries. The size of these migration movements was

considerable and is reflected in the low net growth rate of the West Bank population. The West Bank population increased on average by 60,000 people in the period 1952-1967, with an annual growth rate not exceeding 0.53% (Kossaifi, 1985).

One may conclude from Table 2.5 that the emigration movement in the early 1960's was more than that of the 1950's, as reflected in net annual growth rates. The average net migration per annum has been estimated as 28 per thousand for the period 1952-1961. This rate increased for the period 1961-1967 to reach 32 per thousand.

Initially in the early 1950's the migration process was highly selective in terms of age and sex; men outnumbered women and young men outnumbered those over 40 years of age. During the 1960's there was an increasing trend towards reuniting families (Sabatello, 1983).

In the aftermath of 1967 it has been estimated that one fifth of the West Bank population emigrated to Jordan (about 150,000) (Kossaifi, 1985). Jordanian sources have estimated an influx of 177,000 between June and September 1967. As a result of these migrations the size of the West Bank population in 1970 was considered to be only equivalent to the total population of Arabs in Palestine in 1922.

Emigration from the West Bank continued from 1968 until 1986 as shown in Table 2.6, but at a smaller scale. As a result of emigration the annual growth of the West Bank population under Israeli occupation for the period

1967-1986 was about 2.1% as compared with 0.55% during the Jordanian period (1952-1967).

Several phases of West Bank emigration can be distinguished during the Israeli period of occupation as indicated in Table 2.6.

- The first phase covers the period between September 1967 until the end of 1968, when about 30,000 left the West Bank, in addition to 180,000 refugees who departed directly after the war and before the carrying out of the Israeli census of September, 1967. The pattern of emigration during this period can be described as family migration because a large proportion of emigrants wanted to avoid permanent separation from relatives and breadwinners already living abroad. Kossaifi (1985) indicated that 81% of those who emigrated during the period 1967-1972 were children under 15 years of age. The Kuwaiti census in 1975 indicated that the proportion of Palestinians and Jordanians under 15 years of age in Kuwait increased from 35.3% in 1965 to 50.4% in 1970. Also the proportion of elders over 65 years of age increased from 0.5% to 0.7% in the same period.
- The second phase covers the period 1969-1974. This period was characterised by low emigration. The annual average net migration was about 2,700 people. The reason for such a decline in emigration included:-

1. In 1968, Israel and Jordan agreed to the opening of bridges between the East (Jordan) and the West (West

Bank) to regulate the Palestinian movements and the West Bank flow of goods and produce. This policy eliminated the danger of permanent separation like that which had occurred after the 1948 war. The "open bridges" policy still exists today, although some restrictions are imposed on the movement of young people. Thus, the economic motives (pull and push factors) from inside and outside the area became the main reasons for migration.

2. The Israeli labour market was open to Arab workers from the occupied territories. After 1967, Israeli authorities allowed only a small number of Arab workers to work inside Israel. By 1969, the Israeli government relaxed most of the restrictions on Arab workers movement to Israel. This movement was encouraged by the fact that the wages in Israel were much higher than those in local labour markets and in Jordan.
3. The repeated conflicts between the Jordanian army and Palestinian guerillas in 1969 and 1970. had adverse effects on emigration levels.
4. The decline in job opportunities in Jordan after 1967 was followed by the Jordanian Civil war of 1970.

- The third phase involved a return to high net emigration. This phase covers the period 1975-1982, when about 13,000 people left the West Bank annually. The pattern of emigration in this period can be described once again as highly selective in terms of age and sex. Reasons behind the high waves of emigration included:-

1. The high demand for labourers in Arab oil countries after the 1973 and 1979 increase in oil prices.
2. The Jordanian government started a new development plan in 1973, which created a lot of job opportunities.
3. The crisis in the Israeli economy after the 1973 war, followed by the weakness of the Israeli currency, and high inflation rates especially in the early 1980's reduced the attraction of the Israeli labour market. Since 1974, the Israeli currency has continuously lost its value against major world currencies (Mansour, 1988). Inflation rose from 37.9% in 1975 to reach 373.8% in 1984 (Shadid, 1988).

- The fourth phase has been characterised by a modest net emigration rate. The average net migration rate during the period 1983-1986 was about 4,500 people annually. The reduction in West Bank emigration can be explained by many factors.

1. The decrease in oil revenues in the mid 1980's led to a drop in new job opportunities in the Gulf State (Abed, 1988).
2. Compulsory military service in Jordan prevented younger workers and students from residing or working in Jordan. This led Jordan to introduce new measures in order to curb movements out of the West Bank (Abed, 1988).
3. There was a general scarcity of job opportunities in Jordan in the 1980's.

4. The Israeli authorities imposed a lot of restrictions on youth movements from the West Bank.

Data on patterns of emigration from the West Bank (i.e. from different parts of the West Bank) are scarce and unreliable. There are signs that there has been faster population growth in the southern West Bank districts (Hebron and Bethlehem) than in the northern West Bank districts (Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem) (Benvinisti, 1986). The differences in population growth between districts do not seem to be the result of differential fertility levels, but reflect emigration patterns. Most West Bank emigrants from the north settled in the Gulf states while people from the south and middle West Bank preferred to emigrate to North America (Kossaifi, 1985). Opportunities for the latter migration movement have been more constrained and consequently have produced a differential emigration pattern.

2.4.5 Labour force

West Bankers have in the past coped with the problem of their limited job market by seeking employment either in the East Bank (Jordan) or in other countries. Since 1967, a considerable number of people from the West Bank have also accepted work inside Israel.

In the first year of Israeli occupation, the Israeli government allowed only a limited number of people to work inside Israel's labour market. The number of Arabs in the West Bank who worked inside Israel did not exceed 5,000 people in 1968. According to Israeli Central Bureau of

Statistics the total number of West Bank workers who worked inside Israel in 1970 was about 14,700. This number equalled only 13% of the total amount of manpower in the West Bank. In 1975, the total number increased dramatically to reach 40,000. This number constituted about one third of the total labour force. After 1975 there was a slight increase in the number, when it reached 47,500 by 1985, while the proportion of West Bank workers who worked inside Israel did not change significantly and remained around 30% of the total labour force between 1975-1985 (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1987).

In 1982 about 43,000 people from the West Bank were officially employed in Israel, in addition to an estimated 20,000 unregistered workers. Moreover, 15,000 Arabs from East Jerusalem worked in West Jerusalem (the original Israeli part) or inside Israel, while about another 15,000 people worked for Israeli contractors inside the West Bank, especially in the construction sector (Hochstein, 1983).

Since 1967 the West Bank has effectively provided a pool of unskilled or semi-skilled workers for Israel. Over half of the West Bankers who work inside Israel are working in the construction sectors. They consistitute about 18% of the total number of people employed in construction and public work in Israel (Abu-Lughod, 1982).

The labour force participation rate during the period 1968 to 1985 has not exceeded 35%, while the labour force participation of Jewish people has climbed to reach 50% in

1983 (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1984). In Jordan, the 1982 participation rate reached 42% (Ministry of Labour, 1983). The reasons behind the low participation rate from the West Bank may include:

1. Workers emigration from the West Bank to Jordan and other Arab oil countries, particularly from skilled and semi-skilled workers.
2. The scarcity of female job opportunities. Therefore, it is expected that the women's participation in the labour force in the West Bank is less than that in Jordan. The proportion of working women or those seeking employment is about 13% (Abu-Shokor, 1987).
3. The proportion of women in the labour force in both Jordan and the West Bank is lower than that in Israel as a result of cultural norms and religious teaching.
4. The proportion of young people under the age of 15 in Jordan and the West Bank is higher than that in Israel as a result of higher fertility levels.
5. There has been an increase in the proportion of children and young people attending schools and universities. The proportion of the population who attended post school education (universities and colleges) increased from 0.9% in 1970 to 10.1% in 1985. The increase for women was from 0.5% to 6.6% for the same period (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1986).

Table 2.12 indicates that the labour force itself increased from 93,000 in 1968 to 159,200 in 1985, an absolute increase of 66,200 (71.2%), compared with the

Jordanian rate of increase of 95% in the same period, which gives an indication of the impact of emigration on the labour force.

The poor performance of the West Bank economy as a result of lack of investment, lack of resources and the confiscation of large areas of agricultural land by the Israeli authorities for military and Jewish settlement purposes made the West Bank labour market incapable of offering job opportunities, at least with the same level of wages offered by the Israeli labour market.

Table 2.12 shows that the size of the employed labour force inside the West Bank increased by only 4,000 workers per annum over the past 14 years. This phenomenon can easily be explained by high rates of labour emigration and a large number of West Bank workers inside Israel. Table 2.13 indicates a significant shift from the productive sector to the services. For example, the number of employees in the agricultural sector declined by 30% between 1970-1984. This decline could be due to several factors, such as the confiscation of agricultural land, relatively high wages in the Israeli labour market provided to unskilled people and water resources which are controlled by Israeli's national water company "Mekorot".

The industrial sector stagnated as a result of skilled emigration, competition with Israeli production, high taxes and a low level of investment in this sector. Therefore, the number of employees in this sector did not

Table 2.12

Labour force in the West Bank (1968-1985).

| YEAR | LABOUR FORCE | | | | | | POPULATION AGE 15-64 | | POPULATION AGE 15-64 OUTSIDE LABOUR FORCE | | POPULATION WORKING IN ISRAEL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | EMPLOYED | | NOT EMPLOYED | | NO. IN LABOUR FORCE | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | |
| | No 1000 | % 2/4 | No 1000 | % 3/4 | No 1000 | % 4/5 | No 1000 | % | No 1000 | % 6/5 | No 1000 | % 7/4 |
| 1968 | 82.9 | 89.1 | 10.1 | 10.9 | 93.0 | 30.1 | 308.6 | 25.9 | 215.6 | 69.9 | 5.0 | 5.4 |
| 1970 | 114.6 | 96.8 | 3.8 | 3.2 | 118.4 | 36.7 | 322.9 | 53.1 | 204.5 | 63.3 | 14.7 | 12.4 |
| 1975 | 132.3 | 98.8 | 1.6 | 1.2 | 133.9 | 36.5 | 366.9 | 54.3 | 233.0 | 63.5 | 40.4 | 30.2 |
| 1980 | 134.8 | 98.8 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 137.2 | 34.2 | 401.0 | 55.4 | 263.8 | 65.8 | 40.6 | 29.6 |
| 1981 | 133.4 | 98.6 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 135.3 | 33.6 | 402.9 | 55.1 | 267.6 | 66.4 | 39.9 | 29.5 |
| 1982 | 140.9 | 98.7 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 142.8 | 35.2 | 405.9 | 54.2 | 263.1 | 64.8 | 43.0 | 30.1 |
| 1983 | 147.2 | 97.4 | 3.9 | 2.6 | 151.1 | 35.9 | 420.7 | 54.5 | 269.6 | 64.1 | 48.1 | 31.8 |
| 1984 | 158.5 | 99.1 | 1.5 | 0.9 | 160.0 | 36.7 | 436.3 | 55.0 | 276.3 | 63.3 | 54.4 | 34.3 |
| 1985 | 151.2 | 95.0 | 8.0 | 5.0 | 159.2 | 35.9 | 443.8 | 53.2 | 284.3 | 64.1 | 47.5 | 29.8 |

Calculated by researcher from different volumes of Statistical Abstract of Israel.

substantially change. In contrast with that the number of employees in services increased by 33.6% during this period (1970-1984).

Table 2.13

Distribution of employment in the West Bank, by economic sector (1970-1984).

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1983 | 1984 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total (thousand) | 99.9 | 91.9 | 94.3 | 99.0 | 104 |
| Agriculture | 42.4 | 31.8 | 31.3 | 29.2 | 29.6 |
| Industry | 14.6 | 14.5 | 14.3 | 16.0 | 16.5 |
| Construction | 8.4 | 7.7 | 10.1 | 10.9 | 11.8 |
| Services | 34.5 | 37.9 | 38.6 | 43.0 | 46.1 |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1985, p725.

It is possible to suggest a theoretical model of West Bank labour movement since 1967. This model could be developed through further research and with the availability of more reliable data. As already discussed the West Bank operates as a reservoir of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour force. The incapability of the West Bank labour market to provide jobs for the available all manpower has, therefore, resulted in large segments of labour being tapped by the Israeli market while segments have become migrant labour to Jordan and other countries.

The Israeli labour market has attracted unskilled and, to some extent, semi-skilled labour with better wages compared with the income offered in the local market

(Sabatello, 1983). Abu-Shokor (1987) found that 77% of all employees in Israel were aged between 16 and 35, and about 37% of the total number were first time entrants to the labour market. He also found that only 7% of workers had attained more than secondary education. Thus it is easy to conclude that most West Bank labourers in Israel were unskilled and semi-skilled.

It is difficult to obtain separate data from Jordanian resources about West Bankers working in Jordan, simply because they are regarded as Jordanian citizens. However, it would seem likely that most emigrants from the West Bank who migrate to Jordan are:-

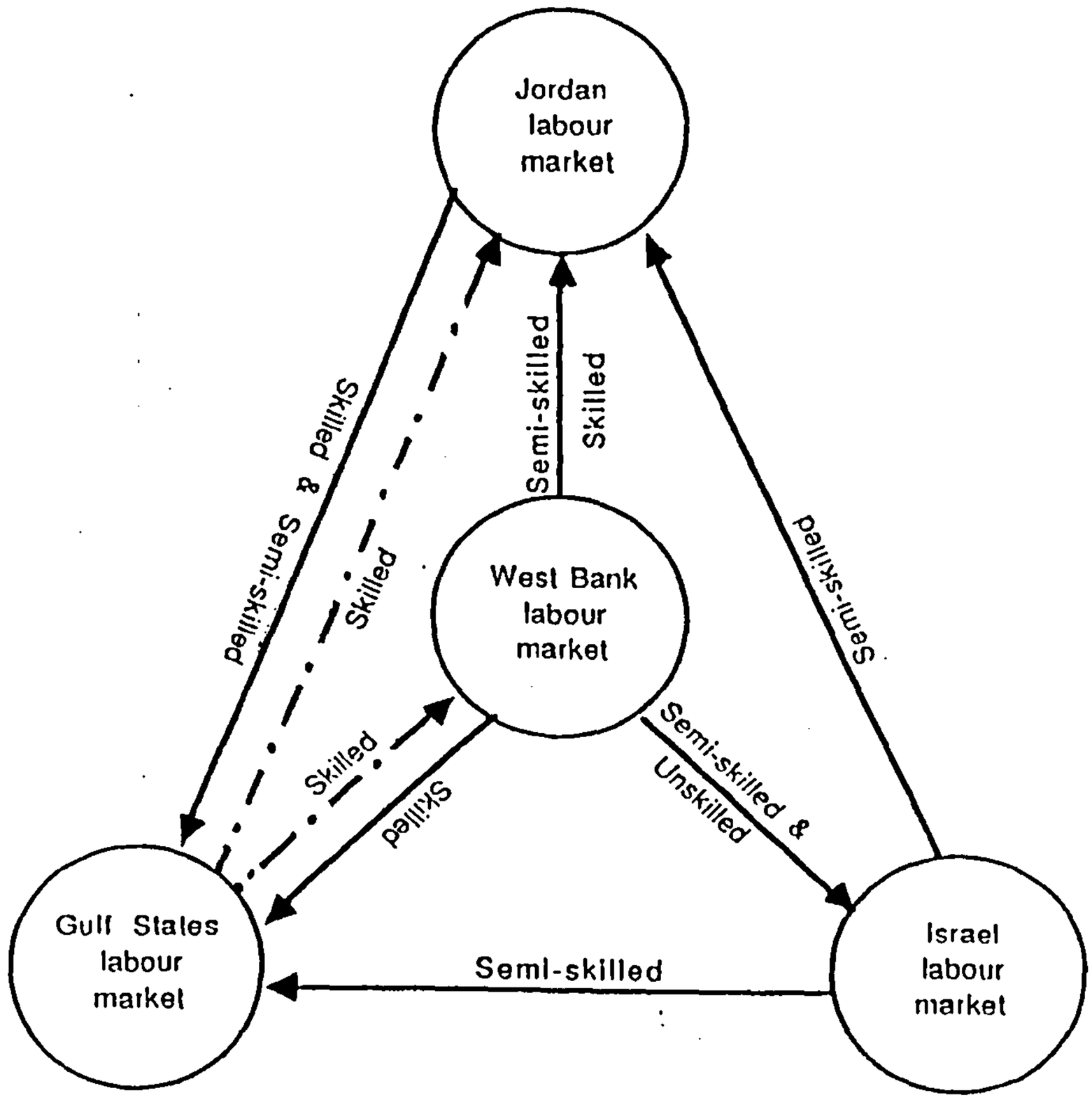
1. Skilled people with a higher level of education. These people lack the experience to work in the Gulf States and did not find suitable jobs in the West Bank, or refused to work as a blue collar workers inside Israel.
2. Semi-skilled people who found good opportunities to work in Jordan, especially in the construction sector.

Some of these migrants came directly from the West Bank labour market while others came after a spell employed in the Israeli labour market. Most of them hope to gain experience in order to later obtain a job in the Arab oil countries.

The high salaries and wages offered in the Gulf States have attracted Palestinians, even though access to this desirable labour market is highly constrained. Many Gulf employers demand not only work experience but also insist that an employee must be single or come on a

batchelor status contract.

Figure 2.5: West Bank labour Movement model.




The Kuwaiti census in 1975 indicated that 44% of the employed "Jordanian and Palestinian" workforce were professional people in high management level jobs and 26.7% held other administrative jobs.

Return migration from the Gulf states started to increase in the early 1980's and has increased almost every year since. Most return migrants have preferred to resettle in Jordan where the opportunities to have suitable jobs and investments are greater than in the West Bank. This is especially true amongst skilled workers.

### 2.4.6 Jewish settlements in the West Bank

Following the occupation of the West Bank, Israel embarked on a policy of colonial settlement in the occupied territories (West Bank, Gaza strip, Golan Heights, Sinai). A series of military settlements established along the Jordan Valley in 1968, were followed in 1969 by a number of civilian agricultural settlements (Harris, 1980). At first the civilian settlements were planned by a number of agencies and extremely religious groups with little co-ordination or agreement between them.

Pressure groups brought about the establishment of new settlements, many of which were in existence long before any planning approval or building permission had been granted. The Israeli government did not reject or revise the action of these agencies.

In the early 1980's circumstances changed, the major settlement agencies agreed to produce a master plan for the West Bank to be approved and supported by the government (Hochstein, 1983). In 1979 the Israeli government recognised and accepted by all the settlements which had been previously established (Rowley, 1984).

The main elements of the master plan were as follows:-

1. Planners approved an average population growth rate of 5 - 7.5% in these forecasts. The Jewish settler population numbered 120,000 in 1980 (including Jerusalem) but was projected to increase to reach 600,000-800,000 people by the year 2010.

2. The plan attempted to increase the Jewish population in the West Bank from 2.8% of the total West Bank population in 1982 to 27-42% by 2010.
3. An extensive road network was proposed across the West Bank, linking all the settlements to each other and to Jerusalem.
4. Extensive agriculture and industrial developments were to be promoted to provide employment for the Jewish settlers.

The main aim of this plan was clear; firstly, to bring a large Jewish population into the West Bank and secondly, to ensure a wide distribution of Jewish settlements and population in order to change the demographic and strategic geography of the area.

The Israeli authorities confiscated all the land which had been at the disposal of the Jordanian government. By the middle of 1980 more than half of all West Bank land had been expropriated. The area exceeded one million donums (Abed, 1988). Also the Israeli government confiscated 328,789 donums of land from absentees who had fled abroad when the 1967 war broke out. Also, 21,000 donums were expropriated in the Jerusalem area and its environs. These figures exclude the area which the occupying forces had fenced off for military purposes (Kossaifi, 1980).

Table 2.14 shows the increase in Jewish settlers in the West Bank from early 1970's until 1986. The number of

Jewish settlers in the West Bank increased by less than 1,200 in 1972 to 10,000 by the end of 1979. The average growth rate of Jewish settlers was 7.5% for this period, while the average growth rate for all of the period (1972-1986) was about 50%. It can also be noted from the table that the total increase in Jewish settlers from 1972 until 1979 equals half the total increase in the year 1984. The proportion of the Jewish population inside the West Bank increased from less than 0.2% in 1972 and reached more than 7% in 1986.

The differences in the Jewish population growth rate in the West Bank in the 1970's and 1980's reflects the differences in the settlement strategy of the two main political parties (Labour and Likud). When the Likud party gained power in 1977, about 17 colonial settlements were established in the West Bank. Between 1977 and the end of 1978, a further 8 were already being founded by religious groups (Rowley, 1984).

The establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank meant that West Bank Arab farmers and bedouin nomads have been continually subjected to land expropriation and the seizure of their livestock. For example, two Israeli settlements (Mehola and Argaman) were constructed on 13,100 donums confiscated from the two neighbouring Arab villages of Bardala and Marj Najeh (Matar, 1984).

Table 2.14

Jewish settlers in the West Bank (1972-1986).

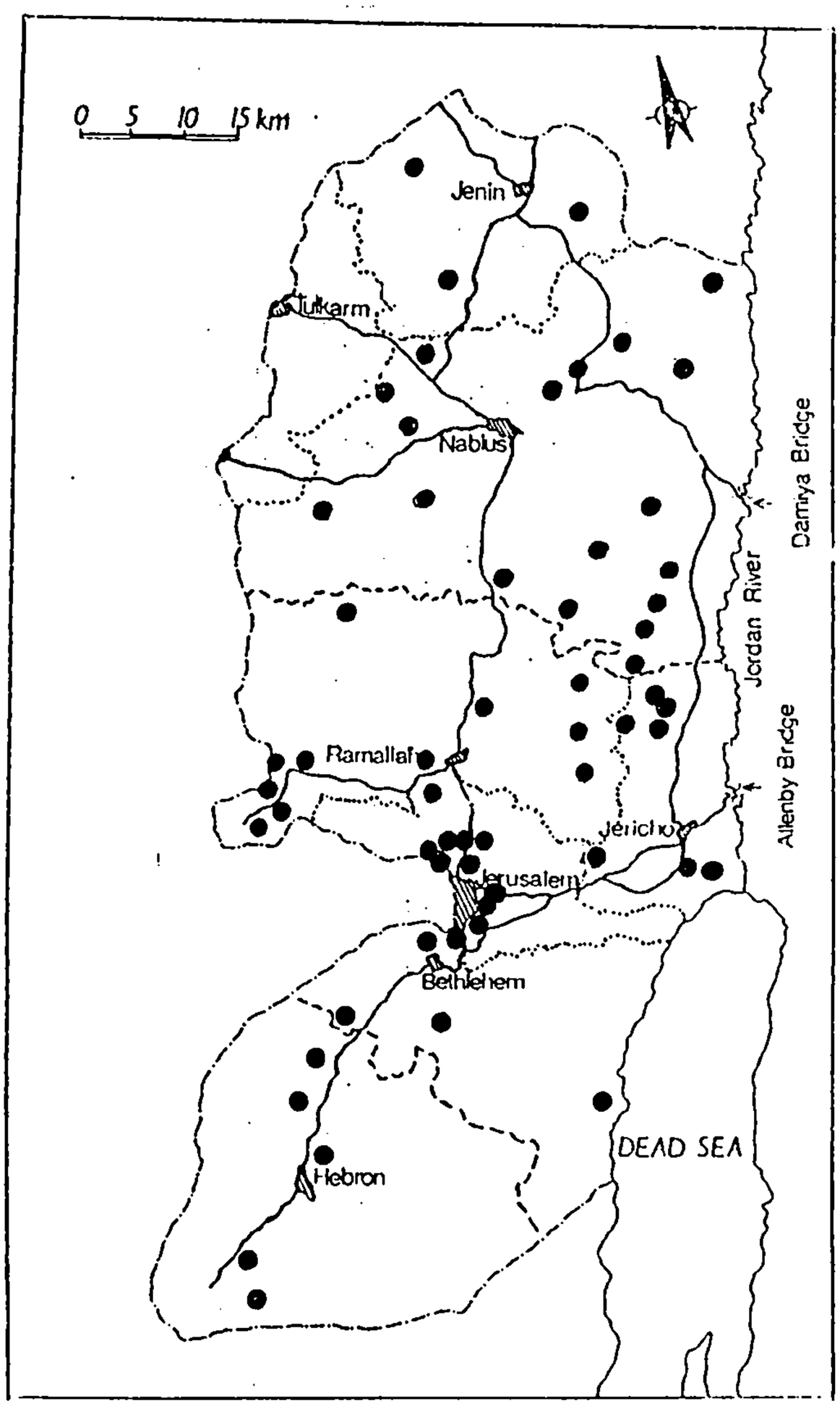
| YEAR | TOTAL NUMBER | ABSOLUTE INCREASE | PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ARAB POPULATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1972 | 1182 | - | 0.19 |
| 1973 | 1514 | 332 | 0.23 |
| 1974 | 2019 | 505 | 0.30 |
| 1975 | 2581 | 562 | 0.38 |
| 1976 | 3176 | 595 | 0.46 |
| 1977 | 5023 | 1847 | 0.72 |
| 1978 | 7361 | 2383 | 1.00 |
| 1979 | 10000 | 2369 | 1.40 |
| 1980 | 12424 | 2424 | 1.70 |
| 1981 | 16119 | 3695 | 2.20 |
| 1982 | 21000 | 4881 | 2.80 |
| 1983 | 27500 | 6500 | 3.60 |
| 1984 | 44146 | 16546 | 5.60 |
| 1985 | 52960 | 8814 | 6.70 |
| 1986 | 60480 | 7540 | 7.20 |

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1987, No. 38, Jerusalem.

Figure 2.6 shows the Israeli settlement distribution over the West Bank. It is clear from the map that most Israeli settlements are concentrated in the Jerusalem area which was formally annexed after the 1967 occupation and linked to West Jerusalem (the Israeli side), they are also spread across Jordan Valley for agriculture and military

purposes.

Figure 2.6: Israeli settlements in the West Bank.




● Israeli settlement

Source: Adapted from Rowley (1984) p61.

The annual average growth rate of Jewish settlers in the West Bank during the period 1972-1986 was 3.34%, while the annual growth rate for the Arabs in the West Bank was only 2.13% in the same period. It is to be expected that since 1986 the growth of Jewish settlers in the West Bank

will show a further remarkable increase as a result of the following factors:

1. Government corroboration with the settlement policy in the occupied territories.
2. Government financial support to the settlers to provide settlement construction. The total expenditure in establishing and maintaining these settlements was estimated in mid 1985 to be more than 2 billion dollars (Abed, 1988).
3. Serious attempts by the Israeli government to absorb Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and resettle them in the occupied territories.
4. The increasing influence of right wing and religious groups within the government.
5. The increase in the number of settlements and the size of the Jewish population in the West Bank is expected to have a negative effect on Arab population growth by forcing West Bankers to leave the West Bank.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The chapter has presented an overview of the basic features of demographic development of the Palestinian people from the beginning of this century, under three different regimes: The British mandate, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Israel. The political situation has played a great role in shaping and reshaping the West Bank population. The first dramatic change in the West Bank population came in 1948 following the declaration of the State of Israel, when about 250,000-300,000 were forced

to leave their homes and settle in U.N. established refugee camps in the West Bank.

The West Bank's limited resources encouraged male youths to seek employment in the East Bank (Jordan) and other Arab and foreign countries. This type of migration has affected the population size, the age and sex structure and socio economic development level in the West Bank. The population size remained almost stable during the Jordanian period (1950-1967).

Once again after the 1967 war, there was an exodus of about one fifth of the West Bank population. Further emigration in the 20 years which followed left the West Bank population in 1984 at a lower level than that of 1967 prior to the Israeli take over.

The migration of West Bankers has largely been a result of the Israeli policy in the occupied territories, which appears to have sought to create a vacuum in the West Bank in order to make way for Jewish settlers (Abu-Lughod, 1982). To evaluate the Israeli occupation role, it is important to summarize the repercussions of Israeli occupation on the West Bank and its population in terms of the following factors:

1. Israeli labour market. Arab youth working in Israel has had a negative effect on West Bank development by attracting students, farmers and skilled workers away from the West Bank and making the West Bank economy more dependent on Israel. On the other hand the

Israeli labour market reduced the unemployment rate, and reduced the migration level to other countries. It also increased, to some extent, family income and living standards in the West Bank which ultimately has had some effect on demographic trends.

2. Jerusalem's annexation. Following the 1967 occupation, the Israeli authorities formally annexed Arab East Jerusalem and considered it as part of their capital. The East Jerusalem area included more than 120,000 inhabitants in 1985.

3. Establishment of Israeli settlements. After the occupation, Israel adopted a policy of establishing Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The number and size of these settlements increased in the late 1970's in an attempt to change the demographic features of the West Bank population. This factor may be regarded as one of the important reasons for the Palestinian uprising.

4. West Bank migration. Israel does not allow West Bankers from outside the territories to return to their motherland unless they hold an Israeli military identity card. This is very hard, if not impossible, to obtain.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present the methodological procedures and techniques implemented in this study. More specifically, this chapter will discuss the following aspects:-

1. Research problem.
2. Objectives of the study.
3. Hypothesis.
4. Research design.
5. The questionnaire (Interview schedule).
6. The survey.
7. The statistical techniques and methods of analysis.

## 3.2 Research problem

The West Bank population has witnessed a dramatic change since 1948 as a result of the prolonged Arab-Israeli conflict. In the aftermath of 1967, the West Bank came under Israeli control. Since then the Israeli authorities have shown little concern for the West Bank's socio-economic development, although they have not been slow to draw on aspects of the areas physical and human resources to assist with the development of Israel itself.

There is a lack of accurate data on the population of the West Bank. Since the beginning of the occupation only one census has been carried out. It is believed that the main motives behind this census were political. Annual

estimates for the West Bank population have, however, been published in the Statistical Abstract of Israel. In most cases there are contradictions in the data used by different Israeli sources (Sabatello, 1983). The Israeli data for the West Bank population are inadequate and may be an unreliable and misleading source of information (Hill, 1983; McDowall, 1989). The Israeli authorities have in addition denied Arab researchers access to various publications on the West Bank population with the exception of the statistical Abstract of Israel, making deeper evaluation of demographic issues difficult.

Immediately after the occupation, Israeli authorities adopted several measures towards the evacuation of Palestinians from their lands. Some of these measures include land confiscation, seizing natural resources, encouraging Jewish settlement inside the occupied territories, denying the Arabs the right to return to their homes and encouraging the Arabs to leave the occupied territories by various kinds of pressure (Abu-Lughod, 1982; Harris, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Matar, 1984). The fertility levels of the Palestinians and their attitudes towards fertility has become a critical issue. The researcher believes that the demographic struggle will remain a decisive factor in any future Arab-Israeli conflict, and hence merits further research work.

Most studies of developing countries, including the World Fertility Survey, reveal a decline in fertility

levels and changes in attitudes towards having large families. This decline is attributed to government population policies, modernisation and the effects of the development process, and couples changing aspirations and socio-economic considerations concerning their desire to have children (Coward, 1986). Numerous studies using different approaches have attempted to explain the factors that cause variations in fertility levels and rates of fertility decline. So far, none of the studies have given adequate explanation of the reasons behind fertility changes. For example Clarke (1985) found that most Islamic countries including the Arab ones have experienced little demographic transition despite the differences in socio-economic status, development level and cultural values between these countries.

## 3.3 Objectives of the study

In the 1960s and 1970s fertility in most Arab countries did not decline much despite the substantial reductions in mortality rates and the effects of socio-economic development processes. Fargues (1989) has shown that as a result Arab growth rates rose constantly until the early 1980s. In the 1980s, however, in some Arab countries such as Algeria significant drops in Total Fertility Rate did occur, leading to the expectation that fertility levels in other parts of the Arab World would seen experience similar reductions. One might anticipate that fertility levels in the West Bank would follow the same trends as those of most other Arab countries but with

there being always some fertility differential. This differential, like that between Catholics and Protestants in N. Ireland (Compton and Coward, 1989) might be assumed to reflect the more favourable attitudes towards having large families which arises out of the region's unusual (unfortunate) political situation.

In order to improve the understanding of fertility trends and the effect of fertility attitudes on actual fertility behaviour in the West Bank, this study examined and analysed West Bank couples attitudes towards current and future fertility behaviour. In order to achieve this general objective, this study investigates the following issues:

1. The effect of cultural norms on couple's childbearing behaviour and attitudes.
2. The changes in marital circumstances, such as age at marriage and marriage between relatives, as an influence on actual childbearing behaviour.
3. The extent to which the perceived costs and benefits of having children influence motives, desires, attitudes and decisions towards childbearing behaviour.
4. Gender preference and its influence on family size and the efficient use of contraceptives.
5. The use of desired family size as a reliable measure for predicting any changes in future fertility
6. The differences between "ideal" and "desired" family size

7. The relationship between desired family size and actual fertility behaviour. Is there any interrelation between them?
8. The childbearing decision making process and its effect on fertility attitudes.

## 3.4 Hypotheses

In light of objectives outlined above and in the context of the literature review some working hypotheses emerged for analysing. From the literature review it seemed reasonable to hypothesize, that in the West Bank, as elsewhere in the world, a couple's attitude to fertility would vary in relation to the couple's age, education level, family income, the child mortality rate, the level of women's participation in the labour force and the location of residence. It was hypothesized that desired family size would reflect a couple's attitude towards their demand for children and could be used as an effective measure for future fertility prediciton, especially if couples had the capability to implement their decisions through efficient contraceptive use.

In some respects specific to either Arab culture or the West Bank, are a number of hypotheses, which in the statistical sense of the word, might differentiate fertility behaviour in this region from that in other parts of the world. While the researcher was unable within the scope of this study to undertake a cross-national study, he did investigate the validity or otherwise of the following

hypotheses for couples in the West Bank:

1. Male attitudes with regard to childbearing behaviour are much more influential than female attitudes.
2. Husbands prefer more children than their wives.
3. Women are more willing than men to use contraceptives and to regulate childbirth.
4. Strong marital relationships and effective communication between partners may bridge the gap between partners in terms of their individual preferences, and may also reduce the differences between actual and desired family size.
5. Child gender preference is an obstacle to the achievement of a couple's plans with regard to the number of children desired.
6. As a result of changes in family structure and the shift from agricultural activities to other economic sectors, parents will have less influence on the childbearing behaviour of the next generation.
7. Couples are likely to wish that their sons will have fewer children than they have had, or desired to have.
8. Changes in marriage pattern and age at marriage for both male and female have a substantial effect on childbearing behaviour.
9. The cost and benefit of children plays a less important role in determining the couple's childbearing decision by comparison with cultural norms and values.
10. The average desired family size is expected to be less than the average ideal family size.

## 3.5 Research design

The main purpose of the field work was to obtain reliable answers to the research questions listed above through the application of social science research methods. The researcher tried, within the constraints imposed on anyone working in the West Bank to follow standard field research methods in order to maximise the utility of the survey findings.

Primary data were collected by the researcher between July and November, 1988 through a suite of surveys in the West Bank. The area was divided into four different environments for the purposes of the research. These environments represented the different physical-cultural and socio-economic conditions of the region. They included:

1) The rural environment. Rural areas are mostly occupied by small size population of peasants in each location (village). These villages are characterised by strong and cohesive family ties and structure. The vast majority of the population, including women and children, work on their own farms. As far as their life style is concerned, they are less receptive to social change and are characterised by traditional ways of life.
2) Town environment. The people of this environment enjoy a combination of rural and urban life styles. Apart from agricultural work, they are engaged in other

activities and services such as the running of small firms, enterprises and local shops. In the town, one can find secondary schools, clinics and health centres. Modern transportation between these areas and urban centres is widely available. The town environment was represented in the survey by households selected from towns and large villages.

3) Modern environment. This environment is dominated by an urban lifestyle. This kind of environment is found mainly in large cities like Nablus and Jerusalem. It was noted, however, that urban culture is not homogenous because of factors such as internal migration, variations in family income between areas in a city and different levels of socio-economic development. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, it was important to cover a range of city social classes as represented by low, middle and upper class communities.

4) Refugee camps. This environment consists of refugee camps and represents a whole different pattern of social life. The people of this environment were forced to leave their homes and area of birth after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The majority of the refugees work as menial labourers and live in poor economic and housing conditions.

3.6 Sample selection

The author's sample was drawn from the various environments as follows.

(1) The urban environment was represented by Nablus city. Nablus is the West Bank's largest, most industrial and most important commercial city. Nablus is home to more than 60,000 people. For the purpose of this study a total of 300 households were chosen equally from the city's three main social classes, as defined by Nablus City Chamber of Commerce. According to this classification the city is divided into several quarters based on socio-economic considerations. In the circumstances of the occupied territories, statistically random or stratified sampling was considered impossible. Instead purposive samples were taken from three different quarters. These were chosen to represent the different social classes after consultation and advice from people in the department of regional planning and development. The three quarters included:-

a) Al-Kassaba quarter (Nablus old city) from which 100 households were selected.

b) Al-Jabal Al-Shamali. This represents the middle class from which 100 households were chosen.

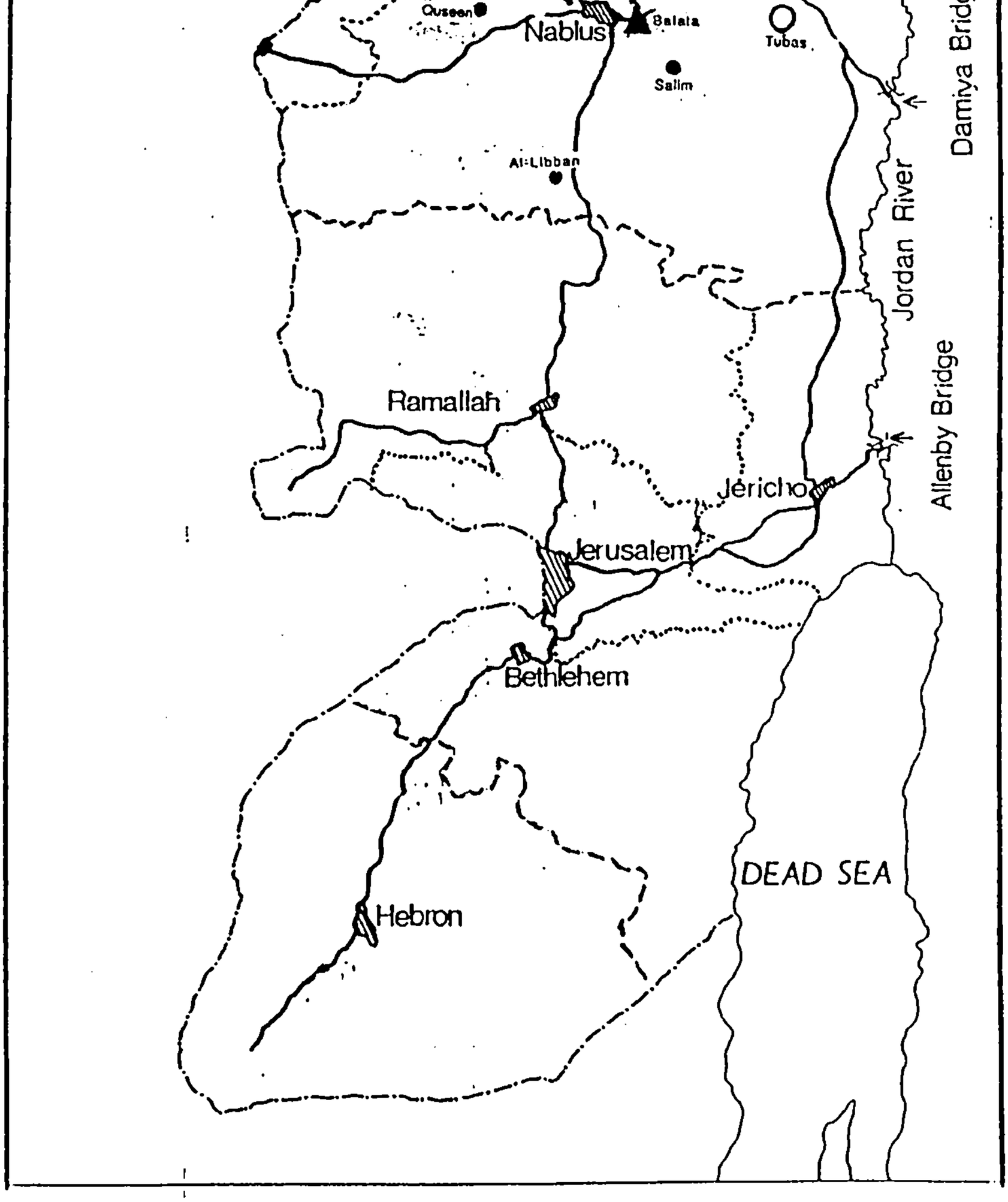
c) Al-Makhfiahi which represents the upper class (the richest area in the city). Again, 100 households were selected.

(2) Small villages. A total of 5 villages in Nablus district were selected randomly. The criteria used for determining and selecting these villages were:

(a) population size (less than 1500 inhabitants), and

(b) settlements administered by a local chief (Mukhtar).

Figure 3.1: Location map of survey areas.



Nearly all the households in these villages were involved in the survey. The sub-sample was distributed as follows:

a) Rameen - 70 households.

b) Salim - 62 households.

c) Beit Emreen - 79 households.

d) Al-libban - 76 households.

e) Qusseen - 35 households.

(3) Towns. Two towns, Asira Al-Shamalieha and Tubas were selected to represent this level in the settlement hierarchy. The criteria used for the selection of the towns were (a) the towns must be inhabited by 5 to 20 thousand residents, (b) the towns must be administrated by town council, and (c) a total of 150 households were selected randomly from two quarters of each town.

(4) Refugee camps. A total of 100 households were chosen, and were divided equally between Ain Beit Elma and Balata refugee camp. The households, however, were selected from the centre of these camps, in order to avoid Israeli check and observation points.

The survey was designed to represent as closely as possible the population distribution across the West Bank settlement system. About two thirds of the West Bank population live in rural areas (small villages and towns) and about one tenth of the total population live in refugee camps. Figure 3.1 shows the location of the areas in which the survey was conducted.

## 3.7 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was devised in a manner

that would provide an optimum level of information. A number of questions may appear repetitious, but these questions serve the purpose of gauging the reliability of the responses.

Two types of questionnaire were constructed by the researcher. The first was designed to obtain data from the husbands, while the second was designed to gather data from the wives. The questionnaires contain many similar questions with regards to couple's attitudes towards family size preference. The questions were selected to be pertinent, easy and quick to answer. In many of the questions a list of alternative answers were provided. However, in order to make sure that no vital information or opinions were missed out, many of the questions ended with an alternative "other - specify" category, where respondents were asked to furnish their own answers. On the other hand ambiguous, embarassing and sensitive questions were avoided.

In designing the questionnaire, the questions which were thought to be of most interest to respondents were placed at the beginning of the interview schedule. It was believed that such an approach would attract respondents to the study and therefore increase the response rates.

The questionnaire contained three main sections. They were:

1) General background. Questions under this heading were designed to gather information on household members such as

household size, relation to the head of household, age, sex, level of education, work status and religion.

2) Husbands' attitudes. This section was designed to gather data from the husbands. The information included questions about family structure, house characteristics, family income, family possessions, attitudes towards marriage, childbearing behaviour, decision making and his preference towards family size and gender.

3) Wives' attitudes. This section contained questions about womens work and marriage attitudes, current fertility, childbearing behaviour, desired family size, gender preference, decision making, family planning and attitudes towards the use of contraceptives.

A sample questionnaire is included as an Appendix of this thesis.

## 3.8 Interview staff

Three students (a male and two females) from the Sociology Department at An-Najah University (Nablus) were recruited by the researcher to help in the data collection. They were briefed on most of the conceivable administrative and circumstantial difficulties which they might encounter during the survey. The students were informed of the purpose of the study as well as the way of conducting interviews.

The research assistants along with the researcher were grouped into two equal teams, of which each included one female. The male in each team was assigned the responsibility of interviewing husbands, while the females

were in charge of interviewing female respondents. As far as conducting the interviews, it is worth pointing out that respondents from the same household were interviewed separately and away from one another, (in separate rooms).

The main reasons behind the recruitment of the research staff were:

1) The large size of the sample. It was believed that conducting a survey of this size, especially during the Palestinian uprising, "Intifada", would take a long time if the researcher chose to do it alone.

2) Females find it much easier to gain entry into Arab homes. Some Arab families are very conservative and female interviewers on their own sometimes find it difficult to gain entry, especially at times when husbands are away from the home.

3) Due to the nature of the study, it was believed that female respondents would be more willing to co-operate with female interviewers especially when seeking information about private and personal issues.

4) Wives may feel more at ease in the presence of another woman, even when they agree to be interviewed by a male.

3.9 Pilot study

Once the questionnaire was translated into Arabic, a pre-test of the questionnaire was carried out between 20th June and 3rd July, 1988. This covered 50 households as follows:

1) Small villages - 10 households.

2) Towns - 10 households.

3) Nablus City - 21 households (7 households from each class).

4) Refugee camps - 9 households.

The pilot study was conducted with the aid of the assistants employed by the researcher. Prior to their actual participation they underwent theoretical and intensive training. Theoretical training included information as to how the interviewer should present him/herself to the respondents and the proper way to ask questions and record data.

The results emerging from the pilot study indicated that there was some need for revision, particularly in rephrasing the questions and in adopting the proper language tones for various age and educational levels of respondent. Three questions were omitted from the questionnaire because of respondents reluctance to answer them.

3.10 <u>In the field</u>

The field work lasted for a period of five months, ranging from 10th July, 1988 to 10th November. Married couples (husbands and wives) were the main respondents. Several reasons can be given for the decision to interview both husbands and wives. They are:-

1) Cultural. The husband in an Arab society has a dominant role in decision making in every aspect of family life (Findlay, 1990; Weeks, 1988). Therefore, the husband is responsible for structuring the family and its

relations, while the wife's role is less important especially in the early stages of marriage.

2) Political. Sometimes wives have no choice, but they may replace their husbands, especially in cases where husbands are at work outside the West Bank or are under arrest.

3) Wives are considered to be appropriate respondents in fertility and family planning surveys in other parts of the world. Their responses are needed to enable comparative analysis and in understanding fertility attitudes and behaviour.

4) Socio-economic development may make female decision making and womens roles more influential in the future.

The 1985 fertility survey carried out in Jordan was directed to husbands. It indicated that husbands' views towards fertility attitudes and behaviour are more traditional than womens. It was also found that there are differences between husbands and wives responses. Therefore, for the present study it was considered worthwhile investigating the differences between a couple's preferences and comparing their responses where appropriate.

A face to face approach was decided as preferable to other methods of conducting surveys. A face to face interview permits a greater flexibility in clarifying questions and is suitable particularly for multiple choice answers.

The majority of interviews were made on the first contact without any prior knowledge of or arrangement with the respondents. Appointments were necessary with a few people holding professional jobs.

The interviewers were instructed to introduce themselves as students from An-Najah University who are collecting data about fertility attitudes to be used only for academic purposes. This was considered necessary in order to avoid suspicion of being mistaken for government agents whose mission was to collect information for tax purposes. Interviewers sometimes found it necessary to explain the purposes of the study in detail because the majority of respondents in refugee camps and other poorer areas became wary of them thinking that the purpose behind the interview was to allocate financial aid. On some occasions, wives insisted on discussing their answers with their husbands, or husband's family. This, in itself could be suggested as a vital topic for further research.

The average interview time was about 30 minutes, but in some cases interviews took more than an hour. The most convenient time to conduct an interview was in the afternoon between two and six o'clock, when husbands were at home after coming back from work. The interviews were not conducted after 6.00pm because of the closure of areas by the Israeli army. In some cases the researcher found it too risky to travel after 6.00pm because the united leadership of the uprising issued leaflets banning the driving of cars after 6.00pm, especially in the Nablus area

where Palestinian cars were confiscated by Israeli soldiers and were then used by the Israeli army in their raids on Palestinian villages and homes.

3.11 Research limitations

Originally, the research was intended to cover the whole area of the West Bank, but due to unforeseen difficulties, and due to the Palestinian uprising, the researcher, along with his supervisor, agreed to limit the sample to Nablus district. The Nablus district is one of only three administrative divisions on the West Bank. The other two are Hebron and Jerusalem. Although Nablus is more urbanised and forms a more important commercial and industrial area than the other districts, it seems improbable that responses to the authors questionnaire, on attitudes towards fertility, would have received different responses in other parts of the West Bank. The sampling method therefore tried to be representative of Nablus district, but interpretation of the results are of wider significance and may be argued to be indicative of attitudes in the West Bank as a whole. West Bank society is relatively small and homogeneous, yet obviously given the lack of reliable secondary data, and the constraints placed on the sampling design, it is hard to verify this.

Problems faced by the researcher included:-

Firstly, problems resulting from the research techniques used. These included:

a) Respondents found it difficult to conceptualise some of the suggested responses to the questions like "strongly agree"/"agree". Lack of understanding stemmed partly from some respondents low educational level.

b) Lack of recall by women as to the number of deceased infants. In many cases the wives had to resort to their husbands for information.

c) Interference of other members of the family in the interviews. This happened in many cases where educated children were present in the homes and where the wives were relatively old.

d) Wives reluctance to answer sensitive questions which they judge to be of a fatalistic nature.

e) Respondents feelings of being disconcerted, especially when responding to some questions in the presence of their children.

Secondly, problems resulting from the abnormal political situation. These problems included:

a) The prolonged procedures the researcher had to go through in order to obtain a written permit from the Israeli authorities. In the occupied territories all researchers are required to obtain written approval from the Israeli military government. Such approval is very hard to obtain and in many cases it is even impossible.

b) The researcher had on many cases to go through road blocks and military check points and would not be exaggerating to say that at times had to risk his life to complete the survey. At the time of the survey travel in

the occupied territories was immensely difficult, with soldiers frequently asking the researcher for his identity card.

c) The continued closure of the area as a result of calls for general strikes made by the unified leadership of the uprising.

d) The imposition of prolonged periods of curfew on Nablus area. Such problems demanded extra time on the part of the researcher.

Despite the military occupation, the fear and suspicion of the interviewers, and other problems, the field work was successfully completed.

3.12 Response rate

The response rate achieved was nearly 90% of all households visited. Those who refused to be interviewed (around 10%) did not allow the interviewer to enter their houses. On many occasions, no reasons were given for such action, while on other occasions, the people gave reasons for their refusal. The reasons were:

1) Many respondents demanded written permission from Israeli authorities.

2) Some of the respondents suspected the motives behind the survey. Many of them thought it to be political.

3) Some respondents asked about the purpose of the study and its benefit to them, and they reported that they had filled in questionnaires several times before but had seen no improvement in their situation.

Apart from this, an Israeli military patrol confiscated 50 questionnaires from the researcher (5% of the total sample) at a military check point near Nablus city.

The researcher extended the survey areas in order to meet the targeted sample size. The final sample achieved was 1000 households. One of the completed questionnaires was confiscated at Tel-Aviv airport during a military search of the author.

The response rate varied from one area to another. The highest proportion of respondents refusing to be interviewed was in Nablus City, especially in the upper class areas. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the response rate in each area.

Table 3.1

Response rate by area.

| AREA | TOTAL SAMPLE | NUMBER OF RESPONSES | RESPONSE RATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small villages | 300 | 292 | 97.3% |
| Towns | 300 | 277 | 92.3% |
| City, lower class | 100 | 93 | 93.0% |
| City, middle class | 100 | 81 | 81.0% |
| City, upper class | 100 | 62 | 62.0% |
| Refugee camps | 100 | 96 | 96.0% |
| TOTAL | 1000 | 901 | 90.1% |

The high response rate (90%) is attributed to two main reasons:

Firstly, the immense amount of help received by the researcher, especially from the students of An-Najah University, who happened to be living in the areas of interviews.

Secondly, the supportive letter obtained from the President of An-Najah National University (see Appendix).

3.13 Statistical methods

All of the data collected underwent computer analysis. The statistical techniques used varied with the types of variables being studied.

Most of the methods used throughout this study are descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage and frequencies. Some inferences are drawn from correlations, chi-square, F-tests and Grammars V. These methods are used frequently to examine the inter-relationship between sub-groups and areas in the sample survey.

In order to find out which of the independent variables accounted most for the differences in respondents attitudes and beliefs, a rather more sophisticated technique, discriminant functional analysis was performed. This technique is considered as an analytical predictor technique and a suitable technique for categorical data. All in all, these various statistical techniques were carried out with the use of the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSSX) at Glasgow University.

## 3.14 Summary

This chapter has sought to outline the research design and the methodology used. More specifically, this chapter has been devoted to the discussion of the research problems, research objectives, and research instruments used by the author.

Hopefully this gives the reader a better picture of where and how the West Bank data were collected. The chapters which follow contain a fuller discussion of the major findings.

# CHAPTER 4

# HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

## 4.1 Introduction

The aims of this chapter are two-fold: first, to describe and explain the basic personal, social and economic characteristics which appeared from the findings of the author's survey; second, to explore the differences between the various districts in their population characteristics.

Some of the characteristics such as level of education, employment status and income might be regarded as non-demographic in the strict sense of the word, although they are frequently used as control variables to explain differential effects of demographic processes. For example, differences in fertility levels and in attitudes towards childbearing behaviour or family planning in different geographic areas may to some extent be explained by the differences in educational levels, variation in employment status, women's work and family income.

## 4.2 Demographic characteristics

Social, economic and demographic characteristics are closely interrelated. In fact, in most cases it is difficult to investigate one of them without taking into consideration the interaction and influence of the others. This section aims to shed light on the main household demographic features; age structure, sex composition, dependency ratio, and the size of the household.

### 4.2.1 Age structure

Social scientists have a special interest in the age structure of a population due to the fact that social relationships within a given community are considerably affected by the relative number of people in each age group. Any development plan requires data on age and sex structure of the population. For example, age is an important variable in measuring potential school populations, future manpower, dependency ratio, etc. This kind of data is very useful for preparing current population estimates in both short and long term projections (Shryock and Seigel, 1980).

In most demographic studies of population change, age structure is considered to be a significant variable affecting and affected by socio-economic and cultural circumstances of society such as economic problems, age dependency and social change. Age and sex usually form the basic classification for the study of other socio-economic characteristics, hence these characteristics vary with age and sex.

Turning to the survey results, one can conclude that the West Bank population is relatively young. Table 4.1 for example shows that the proportion of young people under the age of 15 constitutes 39.7% of the total population. The differences between the various areas seem to be small, ranging from 39.3% in rural areas to 41.3% in refugee camps. The proportion of West Bank population under the

age of 15, appears to be less than the average for most developing countries (Kabir, 1980). This can be attributed to several factors:

1. High infant mortality rate. The low proportion of young population is partly a reflection of high infant mortality and child mortality rates caused by the under developed health services. The Israeli military government states that infant mortality claims 24-30 deaths per 1000 live births, while the Central Bureau of Israeli Statistics indicates that the IMR is much higher at 70 per 1,000 (Odeh, 1989).

2. Low marriage rates. Marriage rates have dropped as a result of the increasing cost of dowries (money for the buying of gold and furniture. For example, in the 1980s the bridegroom on average would need more than 2000 J.D. (Jordanian dinars (£3,125). It is a problem for men to accumulate this amount within a short period of time under the prevailing severe economic conditions.

3. Age at marriage. The increasing age at marriage has a direct impact on fertility levels as a result of education aspirations and job opportunities.

4. Fertility decline. The decrease of population under the age of 15 might be evidence of decreasing fertility levels, because of the increasing number of women using contraceptives and on the other hand as a result of husbands obtaining jobs abroad or being arrested by Israeli authorities.

Evidence of fertility decline can be shown clearly in

Table 4.2 where the proportion of children aged 0-4 is 11.2% as compared with 13.1% for the age group 5-9 and 15.4% for the age group 10-14 in both rural and urban areas.

Because the age proportions of Table 4.1 and 4.2 are closed ratio statistics, the population in the middle age cohorts seems large simply because of the low percentage of young people (0-14) and the older generation (65 years and over). The proportion in the age cohorts 15-64 years was 57.4%. This proportion ranges between 55.6% in urban areas and 57.9 in the refugee camps.

The differences between the percentages of males and females in this age group are quite clear as shown in table 4.1 where the proportion of females is higher than the proportion of males in both rural and urban areas. These differences could be explained as a result of male out migration. On the other hand, in refugee camps the percentage of males is higher than the percentage of females, simply because most of the middle aged males in refugee camps are unskilled and semi-skilled and find work in the Israeli labour market an adequate reason for their stay in the West Bank. Interestingly, this finding is supported by the study of Abu Shokor (1987) who found that Arab workers from refugee camps constitute a large percentage of the labour force in Israel.

Table 4.1

Distribution of population by main age groups in rural, urban and refugee camps "percentage".

| | < 15 | 15-64 | 65+ | Total % | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***RURAL** | | | | | |
| Male | 39.9 | 56.9 | 3.2 | 100 | 1925 |
| Female | 38.7 | 58.2 | 3.1 | 100 | 2013 |
| Both | 39.3 | 57.6 | 3.1 | 100 | 3938 |
| ****URBAN** | | | | | |
| Male | 42.3 | 55.6 | 2.1 | 100 | 815 |
| Female | 38.3 | 59.9 | 1.8 | 100 | 918 |
| Both | 40.2 | 57.9 | 2.0 | 100 | 1733 |
| **REFUGEE CAMPS** | | | | | |
| Male | 39.9 | 57.9 | 2.2 | 100 | 301 |
| Female | 42.6 | 55.1 | 2.3 | 100 | 321 |
| Both | 41.3 | 56.15 | 2.2 | 100 | 622 |
| **TOTAL POPULATION** | | | | | |
| Male | 40.4 | 56.8 | 2.8 | 100 | 3041 |
| Female | 38.9 | 58.4 | 2.7 | 100 | 3252 |
| Both | 39.7 | 57.5 | 2.8 | 100 | 6293 |

* Small villages and towns
** City classes - lower, middle and upper
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 4.2 clearly shows the effect of out migration on some age groups. The proportion of total population has fallen from 14.1% in the age group 15-19 to 10.9% in the age group 20-24 and to 7.9 in the age group 25-29. However, a substantial decrease is found in the age groups over 30 years, which confirms the idea that West Bank emigration is highly selective among active people.

The findings of the author's survey show that the proportion of people aged 65 years and over did not reach 4% in any sub-area. This proportion appears to be smaller

Table 4.2

Population composition by age and sex in rural and urban areas and refugee camps.

| | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RURAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 11.2 | 12.8 | 15.7 | 14.5 | 10.8 | 7.7 | 5.1 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 925 |
| Female | 10.0 | 12.6 | 16.1 | 15.0 | 11.2 | 8.0 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 2013 |
| Both | 10.6 | 12.7 | 15.9 | 14.8 | 11.0 | 7.9 | 4.9 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 3938 |
| URBAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 12.5 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 12.3 | 10.0 | 7.9 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 2.8 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 815 |
| Female | 10.3 | 13.3 | 14.8 | 14.1 | 11.5 | 8.7 | 4.8 | 4.0 | 5.4 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 918 |
| Both | 11.4 | 14.1 | 14.9 | 13.2 | 10.7 | 8.3 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 5.3 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 1733 |
| REFUGEE CAMPS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 14.5 | 12.4 | 12.9 | 15.4 | 11.5 | 7.5 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 2.2 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 1.0 | 2.2 | 301 |
| Female | 15.8 | 13.6 | 13.2 | 13.7 | 9.6 | 7.6 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 2.0 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 321 |
| Both | 15.2 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 14.6 | 10.6 | 7.5 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 2.1 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 3.5 | 0.8 | 2.2 | 622 |
| TOTAL POPULATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 11.8 | 13.3 | 15.3 | 14.1 | 10.7 | 7.7 | 4.9 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 2.8 | 3014 |
| Female | 10.6 | 12.8 | 15.5 | 14.7 | 11.2 | 8.1 | 4.8 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 3252 |
| Both | 11.2 | 13.1 | 15.4 | 14.4 | 10.9 | 7.9 | 4.8 | 4.1 | 3.8 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 2.8 | 6293 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

than expected. The main factors behind this include:-

1. The poor level of health services under Israeli occupation. Odeh (1989) found that the number of doctors per capita in 1986 in occupied territories was 8 per 10,000 compared with 28 per 10,000 for Israel and 22 per 10,000 for Jordan. He also found the ratio of hospital bed/population in the occupied territories to be 1.6 per 1000 compared with 6.1 in Israel. From 1974 to 1985 the population of the West Bank increased by 21% while the number of hospital beds actually fell by 6%.

2. Many older people prefer to live with their sons who are working outside the West Bank, especially in Jordan.

3. The present survey focuses only on currently married couples and excludes widowed and divorced couples, therefore reducing the proportion to a minimal percentage.

4.2.2 Sex ratio

Sex ratio is the principle measures of sex composition used in most technical studies. The sex ratio is usually defined as the number of males per 100 females. In general the national sex ratio falls within a narrow range of values from about 95 to 102 in stable populations (Shryock and Seigel, 1980). The sex ratio can be used for measuring net migration between areas and groups or for making comparisons for any one population through time. In

some cases, sex ratios are used for estimating levels of mortality and migration in specific age groups or testing for the accuracy of the vital registration data and the validity of data from surveys and censuses.

The sex ratio of the West Bank population found in the authors survey was 94.8 men per 100 women. Table 4.3 indicates that the sex ratio for the total population under 15 years of age is 98.3. This ratio is slightly less than the national sex ratio of children under the age of 15 years in most countries, which was carried out by World Fertility Survey (Kabir, 1980). The differences between different areas are quite obvious. For example, the sex ratio of rural areas was about 100 males for 100 females, while in refugee camps the sex ratio is about 85 males per 100 females. These differences are believed to be a direct result of the following factors:

1. Parents report young boys as girls in order to avoid the attention of evil spirits (evil eye).
2. Many parents in Arab society choose not to report their infant daughters.
3. Out migration effects.
4. Females death rates in younger cohorts are considered to be lower than for males.

It is important to indicate that some of these explanations are based on circumstantial evidence rather than on survey responses.

The sex ratio of the population aged 15-64 is more sensitive and important for the study than the general sex

ratio because it reflects the character of the active population. The sex ratio of different areas lies between 82.2 in urban areas and 95.2 in refugee camps. The level in the camps may be because refugees between 15-64 years are less motivated to emigrate compared with the populations of rural and urban areas. Table 4.3 reveals that urban areas are more affected by out migration than rural areas and refugee camps. This is true because urban people are more educated, richer and more skilled, thus making the accessibility of immigration easier. On the other hand, the bad economic conditions in rural areas and the refugee camps, the close-knit family structure and the existence of cohesive social relationships all encourage the young men of these communities to live with their parents.

Table 4.3

Sex ratio by main age groups in rural and urban areas and in refugee camps.

| | <15 | 15-64 | 65+ | Total population |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 99.8 | 94.6 | 98.4 | 95.9 |
| Urban | 97.5 | 82.2 | 100.1 | 88.8 |
| Refugee camps | 84.7 | 95.2 | 87.0 | 93.8 |
| Total population | 98.3 | 91.6 | 97.9 | 94.8 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Looking at the age group 65 and over one sees for the first time the number of men exceeding the number of women. This occurs in rural areas, while in urban and refugee camps the sex ratio is less than 100. The sex ratio of elders reflects the fact that females would outnumber males in this age group on the basis that women usually marry at a younger age. Also, the life expectancy for women may be higher than that of their male counterparts.

### 4.2.3 Dependency ratio

This measure represents the percentage of active people in the total population. From table 4.4 it is noted that the dependency ratio is low and this could be as a result of the population age structure with more than half of the population being in the active age group 15-64. Regarding the differences between areas, it is noted that the dependency ratio in refugee camps is high compared to the total population while the urban dependency ratio is lower than the average. This may be explained entirely by the effect of demographic variables.

Table 4.4

Dependency ratio in different areas (rural, urban and refugee camps).

| RURAL | URBAN | REFUGEE CAMPS | TOTAL POPULATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 73.6 | 72.9 | 77.0 | 73.9 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

It must be noted that the true dependency burden is higher than that shown in table 4.4, simply because not all people of working ages are actually employed. The true dependency ratio as shown in table 4.5 is calculated by taking into account the active proportion of the employed population (both men and women). Table 4.5 indicates that the true dependency ratio in both rural and urban areas is quite similar, while the dependency ratio in refugee camps is lower than in urban and rural areas as a result of the relatively high proportion of working men and women, which might be explained as a result of urgent needs and bad economic conditions of the camps in general.

Table 4.5

True dependency ratio in different areas (rural, urban and refugee camps.

| RURAL | URBAN | REFUGEE CAMPS | TOTAL POPULATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 206 | 207 | 184 | 196 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Looking at tables 4.4 and 4.5, one can see obvious differences between tables 4.4 and 4.5. This could be a result of:

1. The low proportion of women participating in labour force.
2. An increase in the proportion of men in the working age groups thought to be not working or seeking employment as a result of the volatile political situation in the occupied territories since the Palestinian uprising.

3. The increase in the number of males and females who are pursuing higher education.

The true dependency ratio indicates that every working person should be responsible for the well being and support of two people in addition to themselves.

4.2.4 Household size

Generally speaking, the term "household size" relates to the entire number of persons living under one roof, eating together and sharing one budget. The researcher used this definition in collecting data on households in his survey. In the West Bank the household is usually made up of couples, children and other persons who are related to the husband or the wife as blood relatives or by adoption. In some cases in the West Bank the household includes the husband's parents, brothers and sisters and to a lesser extent some other close relatives. It is possible to find two or three households living in the same house though related together by blood relationships (married brothers). However, every household has its own budget and eats separately.

The household size can be determined by several factors. They include: prevailing cultural values, extended family structure, the authority of elders, type of household economic activity and to some extent the political situation. These factors are all influenced in a complex fashion by the level of economic and social development. Therefore, it is to be expected that the

Table 4.6

Household size distribution of different areas (Cumulative %)

| Household size | Rural | Urban | Refugee Camps | Total population |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 9.7 | 13.3 | 9.1 | 10.7 |
| 3 | 20.0 | 23.7 | 22.2 | 21.3 |
| 4 | 30.0 | 33.3 | 29.3 | 30.9 |
| 5 | 40.0 | 46.0 | 42.4 | 42.0 |
| 6 | 51.5 | 60.7 | 51.5 | 54.3 |
| 7 | 62.9 | 75.7 | 64.6 | 66.9 |
| 8 | 73.5 | 85.7 | 79.8 | 77.8 |
| 9 | 83.3 | 92.0 | 87.9 | 86.4 |
| 10 | 87.9 | 95.0 | 96.0 | 90.8 |
| 11 | 92.8 | 98.0 | 97.0 | 94.8 |
| 12 | 95.8 | 99.3 | 99.0 | 97.2 |
| 13 | 97.3 | 99.7 | 99.0 | 98.2 |
| 14 | 99.2 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 99.5 |
| 15 | 99.5 | - | - | 99.7 |
| 16 | 100.0 | - | - | 100.0 |
| Average Household Size | 6.55 | 5.77 | 6.20 | 6.32 |

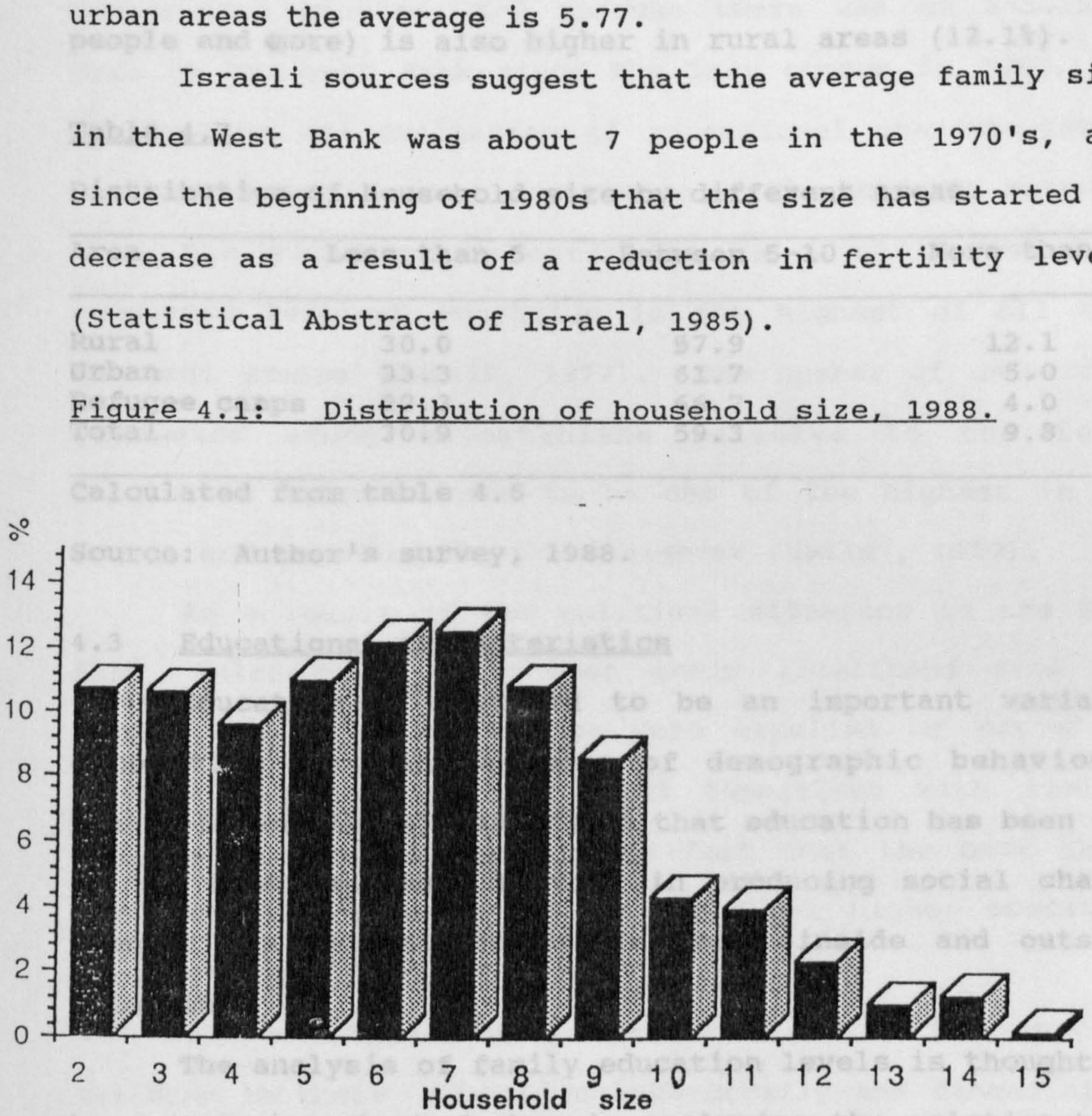
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

household size in the past, as well as in contemporary traditional societies would be larger than in modern industrial societies.

It is noted from table 4.6 that the average size of the household for the total population is about 6.3. The highest average is found in rural areas (6.55), while in urban areas the average is 5.77.

Israeli sources suggest that the average family size in the West Bank was about 7 people in the 1970's, and since the beginning of 1980s that the size has started to decrease as a result of a reduction in fertility levels (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1985).

Figure 4.1: Distribution of household size, 1988.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 indicates that relatively large households are more dominant in rural areas than in urban areas or in refugee camps. For example, more than one third of rural families included 7 or more members while less than one quarter of urban households had 7 members or more. Table 4.7 shows that the proportion of large households (10 people and more) is also higher in rural areas (12.1%).

Table 4.7

Distribution of household size by different areas.

| Area | Less than 5 | Between 5-10 | More than 10 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 30.0 | 57.9 | 12.1 |
| Urban | 33.3 | 61.7 | 5.0 |
| Refugee camps | 29.3 | 66.7 | 4.0 |
| Total | 30.9 | 59.3 | 9.8 |

Calculated from table 4.6

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 4.3 Educational characteristics

Education is believed to be an important variable accounting for many aspects of demographic behaviour. Graham-Brown (1984a) has argued that education has been one of the most important factors in producing social change amongst the Palestinian people, both inside and outside Palestine.

The analysis of family education levels is thought to be a very important factor in analysing the relationships between education and other demographic aspects. Educational attainment has been shown to relate to the

achievement of economic rewards, employment security, prestige, occupational status and income levels. These relationships exist both at the individual level and at an aggregate level. Education therefore serves as an indicator of social and economic development.

As education remains a strong explanatory variable in demographic studies, and because there was no available data on the West Bank since the last census in 1967, the description and evaluation of educational characteristics was considered of great importance in the author's survey.

The ratio of Palestinians as a whole who have completed tertiary education is the highest of all Arab national groups (Zureik, 1977). The number of university graduates among Palestinians relative to the total population is considered to be one of the highest in the world, and probably the third highest (Hallaj, 1980).

As a result of the political situation in the West Bank, Palestinians have lost their livelihood from the land. The Palestinians who were expelled or forced to migrate from their homes found themselves with limited employment opportunities. Many felt that the best thing for them to invest in was in their own higher education (Graham-Brown, 1984b).

The extended family structure has helped support children in their education both morally and financially. It is common to find many extended family members supporting brothers or close relatives who are pursuing higher levels of education (Fasheh, 1984), while in some

cases farmers have sold some of their land in order to support their sons pursuit of education.

Before 1967 and during the Jordanian period, the proportion of school enrollment increased remarkably as a result of development in the educational system, the establishment of local schools in towns and villages and as a result of the introduction of a compulsory elementary education (Baker, 1989). The Jordanian government has also encouraged educational attainment by limiting the employment opportunities in the army and civil services only to educated people (Graham-Brown, 1984a). UNRWA also offered free educational services by establishing many schools for children in refugee camps (Arafat, 1989). These facilities in education reduced the proportion of non-educated people especially among females.

The increasing demand for skilled and qualified people outside the West Bank before and after 1967 particularly in the oil Arab Countries, has encouraged parents to educate their children in the hope that they would get better jobs abroad and in return to help improve their standards of living. Therefore, children's education effectively became an avenue of liberation from poverty, hunger, dependency and want. It is perceived as a means of achieving a better income, the enhancement of family status, and the mastering to some extent of their own destiny (Nakhleh, 1977).

Palestinians still have a bias towards male

education. This might be due to the perceived general benefit to the family. Given West Bank labour market constraints on female employment, there is of course some economic basis to this outlook. Indeed, some parents may discriminate against their daughters education in fear of losing a source of free household labour. This attitude confirms the traditional gender roles of wives as housekeepers and the husbands as financial providers.

In the author's survey (Table 4.8) the proportion of people with no schooling level was only 17% of the total population. In refugee camps about a quarter of the population had no schooling. This might be attributed to several factors:

1. The circumstances which accompanied the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948.
2. Their adaption to a new life style in refugee camps after their expulsion.
3. The inaccessibility of school enrollment in the first years after migration.
4. The poor economic situation in the refugee camps has forced many children to seek employment and become craftsmen in order to help their destitute families.

The differences between the proportion of males and females with no schooling level appears to be very large in rural areas and refugee camps. These variations reflect the cultural values, differential levels of education accessibility and the preference of a son's education over that of a daughter's. It is worth mentioning that most

uneducated people are from the older age groups, since many villages lack elementary schools for females.

The differences between males and females with regard to their low level of education seems to be relatively small. This is not surprising because most families encourage their daughters to attain at least a minimum level of education before growing up. About 18.9% of the total population achieved lower education with slight differences between the different geographic areas as compared with those with no schooling level.

About one third of the population aged 15 years and over achieved medium levels of education. At this level the differences between male and female education increased as a result of several factors.

1. Middle level of education was not encouraged for females especially among the conservative and religious segments of the population because of the inevitable opportunities created by the encouragement for the mixing of the sexes in an unsupervised fashion, with all the implications which this has for the family's image (Al-Mufti, 1977).
2. Lack of educational facilities. For example, some villages have neither a secondary school for girls nor for co-ed secondary education. Parents are hesitant to send their teenage daughters to co-ed schools outside their villages. The author, during his research, found that 2 out of 6 small villages did not have secondary

schools, while only one had a co-ed secondary school.

3. Early age at marriage has a great influence on the proportion of women without secondary level education. It is worth noting that school life normally ends with the start of marriage.

As for the higher education sector, the author's data reveal that 14% of the total population aged 15 years and over have achieved higher education. However, no significant differences were found between males and females in urban areas. There were big differences between the geographical areas. The proportion of highly educated people seems to be smaller than the actual achieved level, because most of the highly educated people found work opportunities outside the West Bank. The highly educated male immigrant can also be partially explained by the low differences between male and female who achieved a higher education.

The differences between the percentage of males and females who achieved higher education in rural and refugee camps can be explained in light of the effect of cultural values, where some families do not allow their daughters to travel alone and be away from home to pursue university education.

Despite the obstacles facing female education, there is a growing and improving distribution of educational institutions of higher learning in the West Bank. This improved accessibility of higher institutes of learning has encouraged some parents to allow their daughters to

continue their higher education locally. In the West Bank, for example, there are five major universities with the largest university "Al-Najah" being in Nablus. Table 4.8 gives a clear picture of West Bank higher education. The availability of these institutions allowed women to attain higher education and to return to their homes in rural areas daily (Baker, 1989). More than 40% of total students in West Bank universities are females. For example, the proportion of females in Najah University is 42% of the total students. Al-Khatib (1976) estimated that 90% of students at Jordan University in Amman were of Palestinian origin and there are more females than males in some faculties.

Table 4.8

Profile of full-time students at higher education institutions on the West Bank 1985-1986.

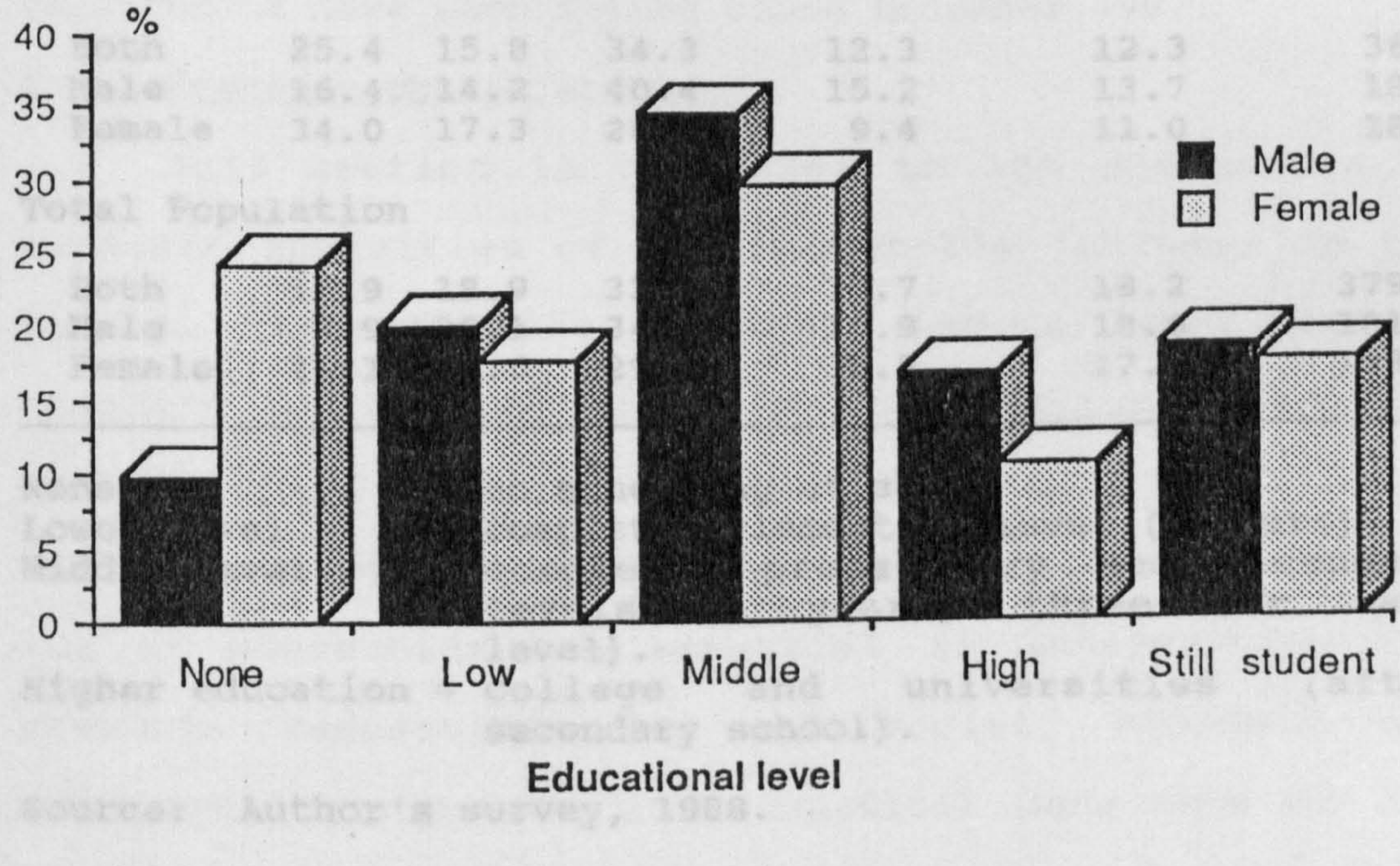
| INSTITUTION | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Al Najah University | 1746 | 1261 | 3007 |
| Birzeit University | 1634 | 770 | 2404 |
| Bethlehem University | 681 | 516 | 1197 |
| Hebron University | 1090 | 656 | 1746 |
| Al-Qudes University | 613 | 807 | 1420 |
| Total | 5764 | 4010 | 9774 |

Source: Varsen Aghabekian, Ph.D. dissertation, 1988, p19.

A final cursory glance at the proportion of population aged 15 years and over who are still pursuing their studies, can be made in table 4.9. This table indicates that about one fifth of the active population are students. The differences between different areas and sexes in each area is not large. From this one can conclude the following:

1. Female higher education is becoming more acceptable to the entire population of Palestinians.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of population aged 15-64 by gender and educational level, 1988.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Percentage of the survey population aged 15 years and more by educational level and gender in rural, urban and refugee camps.

| AREA | SCHOOLING | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Lower Level | Middle Level | Higher Education | Still Studying | Total |
| Rural | | | | | | |
| Both | 17.2 | 17.7 | 30.7 | 14.5 | 19.9 | 2395 |
| Male | 7.9 | 18.9 | 33.1 | 19.1 | 21.0 | 1161 |
| Female | 27.0 | 16.4 | 28.1 | 11.8 | 18.6 | 1234 |
| Urban | | | | | | |
| Both | 13.3 | 22.7 | 35.1 | 12.4 | 16.5 | 1035 |
| Male | 11.9 | 24.1 | 36.1 | 12.6 | 15.2 | 470 |
| Female | 14.8 | 21.0 | 33.9 | 12.2 | 18.0 | 565 |
| Refugee Camps | | | | | | |
| Both | 25.4 | 15.8 | 34.3 | 12.3 | 12.3 | 365 |
| Male | 16.4 | 14.2 | 40.4 | 15.2 | 13.7 | 181 |
| Female | 34.0 | 17.3 | 28.2 | 9.4 | 11.0 | 184 |
| Total Population | | | | | | |
| Both | 16.9 | 18.9 | 32.2 | 13.7 | 18.2 | 3799 |
| Male | 9.9 | 20.1 | 34.5 | 16.9 | 18.6 | 1812 |
| Female | 24.1 | 17.6 | 29.7 | 10.5 | 17.8 | 1987 |

None = no schooling at all
Lower level = completed elementary level (6 years)
Middle level = completed preparatory and secondary levels (6 years, three for each level).
Higher education = College and universities (after secondary school).

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

2. There is increasing demand for higher education among Palestinians.
3. The gap between different areas and the differences between male and female in each area is becoming

smaller as a result of Palestinians' favourable attitude towards the achievement of higher education.

Despite the aspirations and attitudes of Palestinians towards education, there are specific educational problems that exist as a result of the Israeli occupation. The problems include poor teaching conditions, inadequate physical facilities, out-dated curricula, limited school construction, inadequate text books, high drop-out rates and poor library and laboratory facilities (Abu Znaid, 1990). Higher education institutions suffer from the frequent closure by Israeli authorities and road blocks. All the universities and colleges in the occupied territories have been closed since December 1987.

### 4.4 Economic characteristics

This section is dedicated to the discussion of economic activities of the households included in the survey. Aspects like household income, work status, standard of living, house characteristics, important economic characteristics will be discussed. It is believed that an understanding of the economic characteristics of a set of households are essential in interpreting the elements responsible for all social, economic and demographic change. It is of practical importance for the formulation of regional development policy and effective planning and administration.

After the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, Israeli authorities allowed the people from the

occupied territories to work inside Israel, although with some restriction at first (Hillal, 1974). Most of the Arab labour force entered the Israeli economic system as unskilled labour in a range of economic sectors (Abu-Shokor, 1987). The depressed economic situation in the occupied territories, after the occupation has certainly been an important factor in raising the number of people working inside Israel or in construction of Israeli settlements inside the West Bank.

Working in Israel comprises a significant factor in attracting teenagers to leave school and join in the Israeli labout market. Working in Israel is also attractive to some farmers because it offers them relatively high wages as compared with agricultural work (United Nation Economic Commision for Western Asia, 1981).

Growing investment in the Israeli labour market has created a new social and economic situation. On one hand, it has raised family income by increasing the opportunities for job seekers by providing them with better salaries as compared with the salaries offered in the West Bank. On the other hand, Arab workers engaged in employment inside Israel began to realise that more profits are generated for the Israeli economy, since the base wages rate of the Arab labour force are much cheaper than those of the Israeli worker or indeed of Arabs living in Israel itself. It is important to indicate that all Arab workers from the occupied territories are not allowed the same rights or wages as Israeli citizens (Abu-Shokor, 1987).

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank has brought major changes to the West Bank economy. These changes have occurred in part because of direct Israeli interventions in re-shaping economic structures such as patterns of trade, economic sectors, work status patterns, redirecting the labour force and the level of economic development inside the occupied territories. There have also been numerous and sometimes unexpected side effects in the economic and social spheres (Graham-Brown, 1984a).

The substantial changes in the West Bank economy have had a significant influence on family structure and social norms. For example, West Bank youths who find work opportunities in the Israeli market will be more independent economically and as a result his/her parents lose some of their authority over them. This in turn affects the traditional structure of West Bank families (Heller, 1980).

From the mid 1970s onwards the Israeli labour market became less attractive to Arab workers due to the following factors:

1. The existence of alternative employment opportunities outside the West Bank, especially in the Gulf States after 1973.
2. Many Arab workers lost their jobs in Israel after the signing of Camp David accord between Egypt and Israel in 1978.

3. The devaluation of the Israeli currency after 1973 among other foreign exchange currency.
4. The uprising and its adverse economic repercussions on the Palestinians.
5. The harassment of labourers by the Isaeli authorities.

4.4.1 Work Status

Household economic characteristics in general have been influenced mainly by the West Bank's economic and political situation. It is important to emphasise once again that the author's survey was carried out during the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. The Palestinian uprising has had a great effect on every aspect of Palestinian life in the occupied territories.

Population work status was classified into two main categories. First, "employed" persons, which included three sub-categories, working salaried employees, self employed and employer. Second, "unemployed" persons, involving people out of work, retired persons and students. The definitions used by the researcher for each category was as follows:

1. Salared: comprises all persons aged 15-64 years who receive salaries, remuneration in wages and comission in both private and public sectors.
2. Self employed: a person who operates his own enterprise or engages independently in the professions, trade and agriculture and who hires no employees.
3. Employer: a person who operates, supervises or administers his own enterprise or engages independently

in the professions or trade but who also hires one or more persons.

4. Not working: comprises all persons of working age 15-64 and who were found unemployed during the period of data collection. This includes a) those who are not working but are actively seeking jobs, b) home-makers - persons aged 15-64 who are engaged in domestic work and household duties in their own or their parents house, c) those who are of working age and unable to work.
5. Retired: all persons who are not working but receiving income (pension) from their former employer.
6. Students: consists of all persons of either sex who are attending regular educational institutions at any level.

Table 4.10 shows that the proportion of total population in working age who are actually working is only 37.8%. Of these two thirds are employees, working as professionals inside the West Bank or as unskilled workers in the Israeli labour market. The low activity rate of the West Bank labour force may be attributed to several factors:

1. The gradual increase in the proportion of the population in schools or institutes of higher learning for both sexes. This accounts for about 18% of the total population aged 15-64 years.
2. There is low participation of women in the labour force. The proportion of working females is about 7%,

while in Jordan, for example, the proportion of total working females is about 11% (Al-Akil, 1989).

3. The political situation during the 1988-89 uprising has caused many workers to loose their jobs because of calls demanding them to quit their jobs in Israel.
4. Scarcity of work opportunities in the local labour market (Kubursi, 1988; Mansour, 1988).

Table 4.10

Distribution of population aged 15-64 by gender and by work status in rural, urban and refugee camps. "Percentage".

| AREA | EMPLOYED | | | UNEMPLOYED | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sal-aried | Self Employed | Emp-loyer | Not working | Retired | Student | Total No. |
| Rural | | | | | | | |
| Male | 47.8 | 14.5 | 2.5 | 12.9 | 1.3 | 21.0 | 1098 |
| Female | 4.5 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 75.5 | 0.1 | 18.6 | 1171 |
| Both | 26.5 | 7.9 | 1.3 | 43.7 | 0.7 | 19.9 | 2269 |
| Urban | | | | | | | |
| Male | 33.6 | 27.5 | 5.9 | 15.1 | 1.5 | 16.3 | 453 |
| Female | 7.8 | 1.2 | 0.2 | 72.8 | 0.0 | 18.0 | 548 |
| Both | 21.7 | 15.5 | 3.2 | 42.2 | 0.8 | 16.5 | 1001 |
| Refugee camps | | | | | | | |
| Male | 54.3 | 18.8 | 0.6 | 12.6 | 0.0 | 13.7 | 174 |
| Female | 9.8 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 77.2 | 0.0 | 11.4 | 177 |
| Both | 31.5 | 9.7 | 0.8 | 45.7 | 0.0 | 12.3 | 351 |
| Total population | | | | | | | |
| Male | 44.3 | 18.9 | 3.3 | 13.6 | 1.2 | 18.6 | 1726 |
| Female | 5.9 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 74.9 | 0.1 | 17.8 | 1898 |
| Both | 25.6 | 10.4 | 1.8 | 43.4 | 0.6 | 18.2 | 3625 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 4.10 shows that the proportion of persons defined as employers was less than 2%. The majority are located in urban areas. The unstable political situation in the region has discouraged many investors from investing their money in the occupied territories. This argument is supported by the following factors:

1. Industrial activities were minimal prior to the Israeli occupation and have remained so even under Israeli control (Hillal, 1974). The industrial sector mainly depends on traditional crafts and small agriculture based industries (Graham-Brown, 1984a). According to Awartani (1988) only seven establishments employed over one hundred employees.
2. There are no Arab banks in the West Bank to facilitate investment and economic development. It is worth noting that all Arab banks were ordered to be shut by Israeli military order immediately after 1967 (Harris, 1988).
3. Only 4% of total land under cultivation is irrigated mostly in the Jordan Valley. In addition there has been a decrease in agricultural land as a result of Israel land confiscation policy.
4. The Israeli authorities control all the exports and imports to the territories (Shadid, 1988).

Table 4.10 indicates that self employees constitute about 19% of the total population of working age, most of them working as farmers, craftsmen or small merchants. The differences between various areas are quite clear, where

the highest proportion is found in urban areas. The low percentage (14.5%) in rural areas may be due to the fact that agricultural work mainly depends on children and womens work (Graham-Brown, 1984b). Also Israeli statistics indicate that employment in agriculture has declined steadily and substantially since 1967. The number of workers employed in agriculture whether hired or self-employed has dropped from 49,000 (45%) in 1969 to 28,000 (19%) in 1984 (Statistical Abstract of Israel 1971, 1986).

The differences between males and females who are involved in the labour force are very large. These differences can be found in most developing countries, particularly Arab and Islamic societies (Findlay, 1990). About 93% of women of working age were out of work compared with 33.4% of males. Social and religious reasons may be considered as the main impediments to females working outside their homes. In most cases women's work is related to the family's domestic needs (Graham-Brown, 1984b). As Table 4.10 shows that the proportion of women in refugee camps who work outside their homes is higher than that of women in rural and urban areas. Also in the urban area it is possible for women to take professional jobs and gain independence as a result of education. It is worth mentioning that the low percentage of women employed does not mean participation of women is absent from the household or local economy. Some of them engage in embroidery work and farming with no paid salaries.

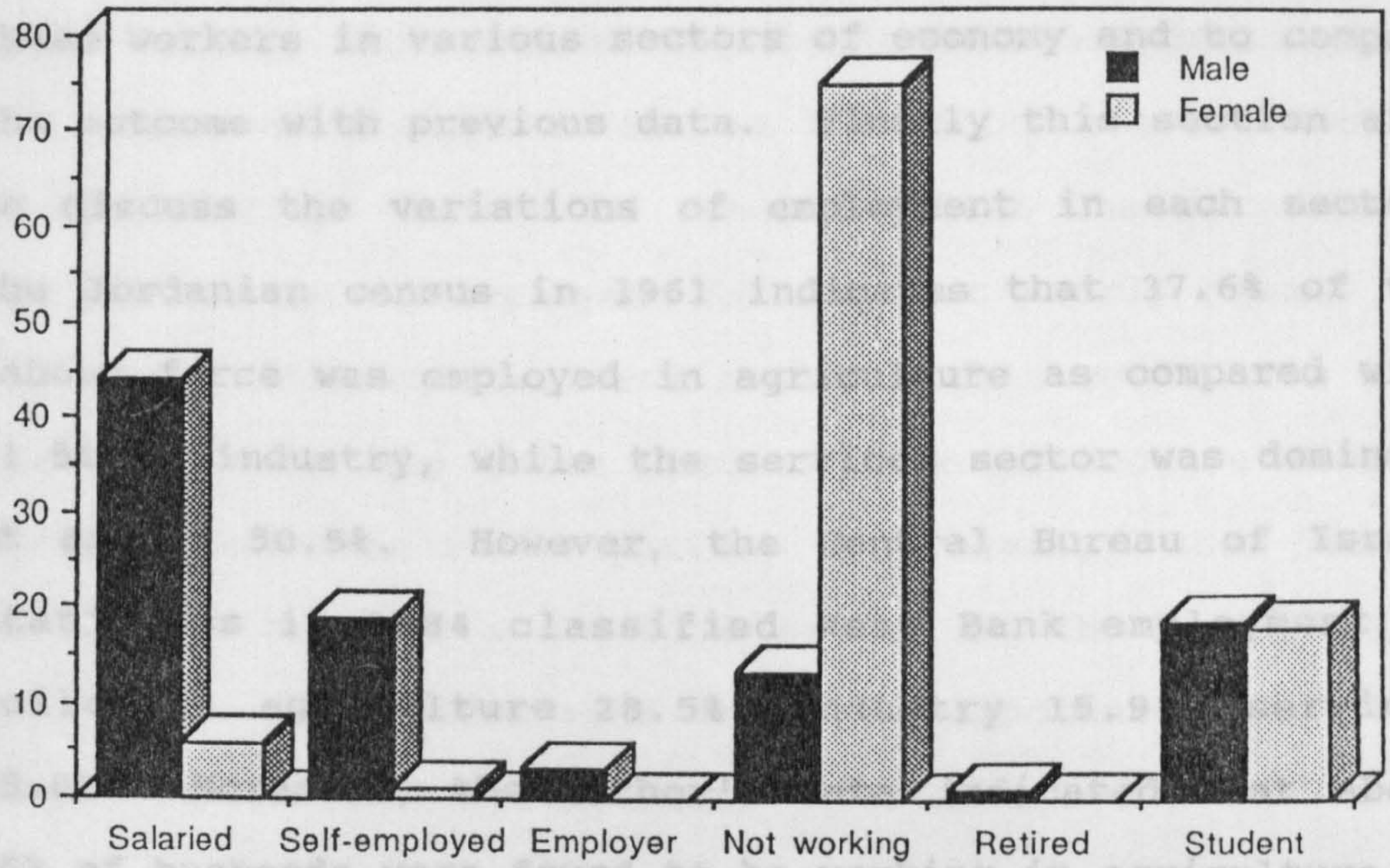
However, women usually prefer to describe themselves as housewives. This is for several reasons:

1. They are unpaid workers.
2. There is no regular timetable for employment.
3. There is an overlap between their work in the house and in farms.
4. Working in agriculture in general is strictly confined to members of the family (wife and children).
5. Large segments of rural wives think that it is part of their duty to help their husbands on the farm.

Most women who do work, do so as employees in the education sector. Many jobs are retricted to men on social and physical grounds. It must be noted that the percentage of working women is higher amongst widows and divorced women, hence adding further social disincentives to married women working.

Table 4.10 shows that there are no big differences in the percentage of male and female students in the various areas. The high percentage of female students in the age 15-64 gives an indication of the scale of change in cultural values that are taking place. This indicator reveals that the woman's position may change in the near future to include new roles. This may cause a delay in the age of marriage and an increase in females aspiration and endeavours. In return one might expect a considerable change in future demographic processes.

Figure 4.3: Population aged 15-64 by gender and work status, 1988.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 4.10.

The "retired" percentage for both men and women in different areas as shown in Table 4.10 appears to be very low. This may be due to three main reasons.

1. To reach retirement one needs to serve long periods in the workforce.
2. There is no pension system for the Arab in the occupied territories under Israeli occupation, with the exception of Jerusalem which was formally annexed to Israel after 1967.
3. Many older people, while less active than in the past, continue to play a role as unpaid labour in the rural economy.

### 4.4.2 Type of Work

This sections aims to focus on heads of the household (husband) of working age to explore the distribution of these workers in various sectors of economy and to compare the outcome with previous data. Finally this section aims to discuss the variations of employment in each sector. The Jordanian census in 1961 indicates that 37.6% of the labour force was employed in agriculture as compared with 11.5% in industry, while the services sector was dominant at around 50.5%. However, the Central Bureau of Israel Statistics in 1984 classified West Bank employment as follows: agriculture 28.5%, industry 15.9%, services 55.6%. Moreover, the author's data indicated that about 25% of husbands were found to be working in agriculture as compared with 11.3% in industry, while the remaining percentage, about 63%, are worked in services. It should of course be borne in mind that the author's survey was undertaken only in the northern part of the West Bank, and may not be entirely representative of the West Bank economy.

Table 4.11

Distribution of West Bank employment by economic sectors.

| | Agriculture | Industry | Services |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1961 | 37.6 | 11.5 | 50.5 |
| 1984 | 28.5 | 15.9 | 55.6 |
| 1988 | 25.4 | 11.3 | 63.3 |

*data include East and West Banks of Jordan.

Source: 1961 Jordanian Census, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1985, Author's survey, 1988, respectively.

Table 4.11 reveals that the pattern of work has substantially changed since 1961 as a result of shifts in the economy. Employment in the agricultural sector has substantially decreased during the Israeli occupation while the level of employment in the industrial sector remained almost static. It can be concluded that the increase in the percentage of employees in services nearly equals the decrease in the agricultural sector. This would mean that no development has taken place in the productive sectors during the Israeli occupation. Inversely, the Israeli occupation has had a negative effect on the agricultural sector which is considered to be an important productive sector of the West Bank economy (Awartani, 1978).

### 4.4.3 Household income

Income is primarily an indicator of the standard of living. It is used as a measure of economic well-being and it is taken along with education attainment and occupation as a measure of socio-economic status. Household income has an important relationship to many variables such as mortality, fertility, migration, level of education and occupation.

In the survey undertaken by the author, household income was intended to represent income from all sources. It is clear from Table 4.12 that more than 20% of all households were receiving very low incomes (under 100 J.D. per month) while the majority of household lived in what might be described as the middle income bracket (100-299 J.D.). The differences between the different geographical

areas are most noticeable at higher income levels (above 300 J.D. per month). The low proportion of rural households who earned high income can be explained by two factors:-

1. The decrease in agricultural rewards as a result of land confiscation by Israeli authorities. This has occurred because of the inability of local agricultural produce to compete with Israeli produce, and because of high taxes, and the difficulty in getting permission to export agricultural produce to Arab and European markets.
2. Most heads of households underestimate their income from agriculture as a result of the irregularity of their income.

Table 4.12

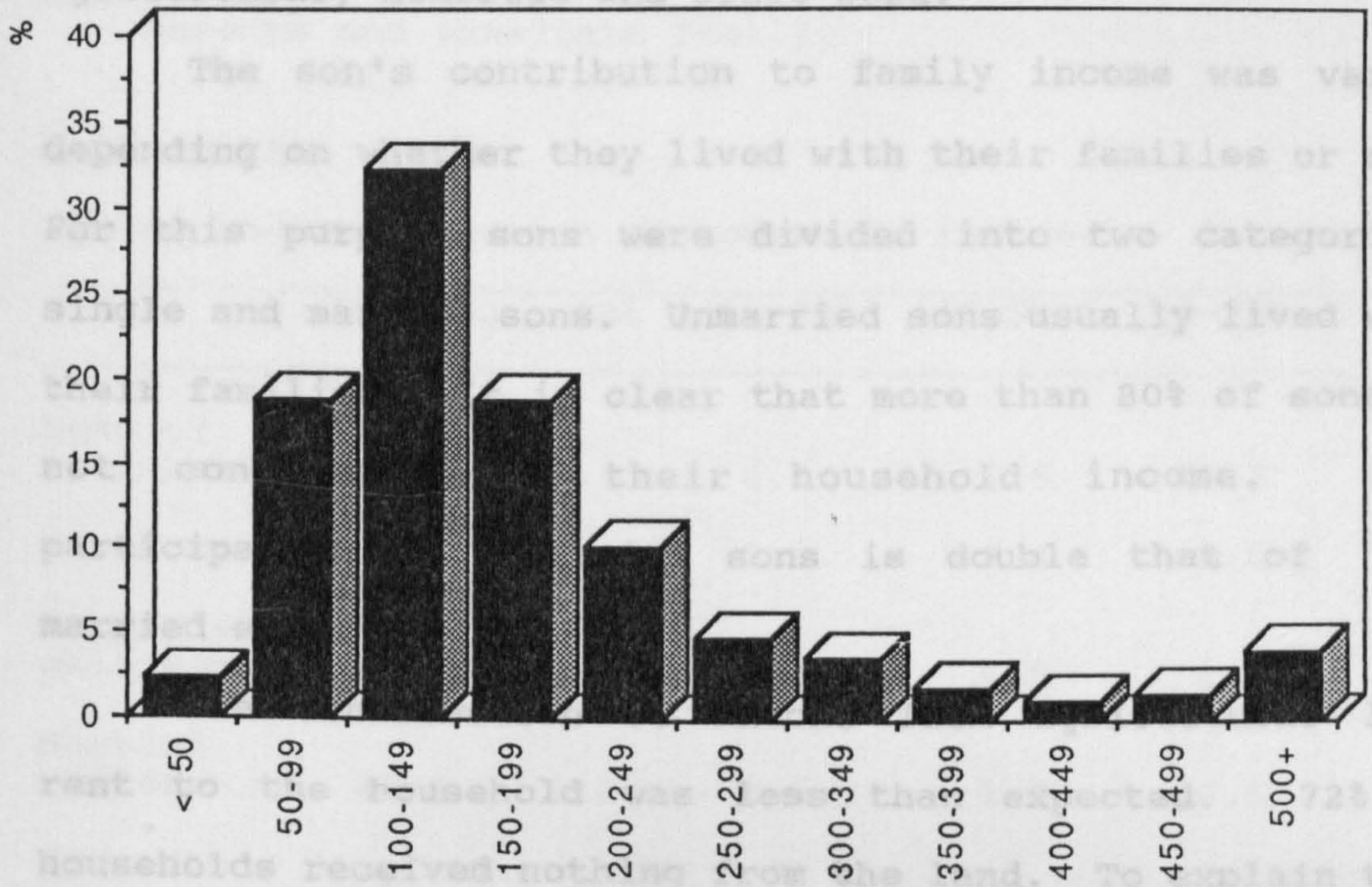
Household monthly income distribution by different areas.

| AREA | <50 | 50-99 | 100-149 | 150-199 | 200-249 | 250-299 | 300-349 | 350-399 | 400-449 | 450-499 | 500 + |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 2.5 | 20.3 | 40.5 | 20.0 | 10.2 | 3.3 | 1.7 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Urban | 2.3 | 16.8 | 20.0 | 17.3 | 10.3 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 4.3 | 2.0 | 3.5 | 9.8 |
| Refugee camps | 3.0 | 8.1 | 29.3 | 21.2 | 14.1 | 10.1 | 8.1 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 2.4 | 18.9 | 32.3 | 18.9 | 10.2 | 4.8 | 3.7 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 4.1 |

Income by Jordanian dinars.

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of household monthly income (J.D.), 1988.




Source: Author's survey, 1988.

4.4.4 Source of household income

Household income in the West Bank comes from many different sources. This section will investigate the contribution of each source to household income.

Table 413 shows that the work of the head of the household is the primary source of income. More than 55% of heads of households were responsible for 80% or more of household income. Only 10.9% of the heads of the household contributed nothing to their household income and depended on their incomes from other resources. Wives' work constituted a small percentage of the total household income. It is important to mention that most wives contribute to household income in an indirect way by

working without a salary through their participation in agricultural, domestic and craft work.

The son's contribution to family income was varied depending on whether they lived with their families or not. For this purpose sons were divided into two categories: single and married sons. Unmarried sons usually lived with their families. It is clear that more than 80% of sons do not contribute to their household income. The participation of unmarried sons is double that of the married sons.

The contribution of income from agricultural land rent to the household was less than expected. 72% of households received nothing from the land. To explain this one can say that the majority of farmers believe that what they gain from working their land is a repayment for their work and not a direct contribution from the land itself.

The contribution of other sources such as property, investments, pensions, charities and from relatives seems to be very small and does not exceed 3%. This is a result of:

1. The unstable political situation in the West Bank which discourages proper investment.
2. The contributions of local charitable organisations are less than expected due to their inadequate financial resources.
3. There is no pension system in the West Bank with the exception of East Jerusalem.

4. The contribution of relatives to household income is minimal because people already have to support their parents and immediate family.

Table 4.13

Source and contribution of household income.

| | Nothing | <20% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | >80% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Head of household | 10.9 | 0.3 | 4.6 | 16.6 | 12.3 | 55.3 |
| Wives work | 95.0 | 0.4 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Unmarried children | 78.3 | 5.7 | 9.0 | 5.3 | 1.3 | 2.2 |
| Married children | 86.6 | 6.6 | 4.3 | 1.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| From the land | 72.2 | 18.0 | 7.8 | 1.6 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| From property | 79.1 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Investment | 97.2 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.0 |
| Pension and charity | 97.0 | 0.3 | 1.3 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Others | 99.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 4.14 shows that 7.7% of the households live permanently in economic difficulties, as compared with about 27% of households who meet economic difficulties on some occasions. While about two thirds of all households have not had any economic difficulties.

Table 4.14

Financial difficulties facing households.

| | Always | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | 7.7 | 26.8 | 65.5 |
| Rural | 8.0 | 27.3 | 64.7 |
| Urban | 8.0 | 24.4 | 64.7 |
| Refugee camps | 5.1 | 31.2 | 63.7 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

### 4.4.5 Living standards

Many other indicators can be used to measure standards of living in addition to household income. This section will focus mainly on family possessions and household characteristics, and will investigate the differences between the different areas.

For the purpose of this study the following belongings were used in order to measure respondents standards of living. They were ownership of a: private vehicle, black and white television, coloured television, video equipment, refrigerator, washing machine and telephone. Ownership of these types of consumer goods has increased as the proportion of households supplied with electricity has risen. The proportion of households with electricity rose between from 23% in 1967 to 51% in 1981 (Sabatello, 1983).

About one fourth of West Bank households have private cars. The highest percentage can be found in urban areas

(42.3%) as compared with 25.3% and 15.0% in refugee camps and rural areas respectively. It is important to note that some of these cars are used as taxis and contribute to household income. This phenomenon occurs more in rural areas and refugee camps where there are no reliable means of transportation available. The Israeli sources claimed that the number of households owning a private car tripled during the 1970s (Sabatello, 1983).

Looking at table 4.15 one can notice that the majority of households in the sample are owners of televisions of some kind or another. However, it is shown from the table that coloured televisions and video sets are more widespread in urban areas than in rural areas and refugee camps where households normally resort to buying second hand black and white televisions at lower cost. Another possible argument for the increase in the percentage of television owners is the widespread perception that television and videos are considered as a part of a dowry on the part of the husband that has to be supplied before or at the time of marriage.

More than 95% of all households possessed a refrigerator. As for washing machines the differences in responses are quite obvious. For example, almost 95% of urban households possess washing machines as compared to 72.7 and 49% in refugee camps and rural areas respectively. In urban areas about 45% of the households had a telephone while the percentage did not exceed 8% in refugee camps and 1% in rural areas. These differences can be attributed to

several factors:

1. The communication network covers only urban areas and adjacent refugee camps.
2. Direct forms of communication are quite possible in villages and towns.

Table 4.15

Family possessions in different areas.

| | PERCENTAGE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Rural | Urban | Refugee camps |
| 1. Private car | 24.2 | 15.0 | 42.3 | 25.3 |
| 2. Black & white television | 67.8 | 81.5 | 40.3 | 67.7 |
| 3. Colour television | 23.1 | 5.2 | 57.7 | 27.3 |
| 4. Video | 11.7 | 1.0 | 34.7 | 7.1 |
| 5. Refrigerator | 97.5 | 95.8 | 99.1 | 98.0 |
| 6. Washing machine | 66.3 | 49.0 | 94.5 | 72.7 |
| 7. Telephone | 15.0 | 1.0 | 45.3 | 8.1 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

In contrast with the statistics presented in Table 4.14 the data on ownership of consumer goods reveals that the standard of living in urban areas is better than in rural areas and in refugee camps. But it is worth mentioning that these indicators may not give an accurate picture of the true standards of living in the West Bank. To ascertain to what extent the high ownership levels reflects the nature of the development processes which have

affected the West Bank. These include:

1. Remittance of incomes from employment in Israel and abroad.
2. The inflation effect and the drop of Israeli currency relative to other foreign currencies. This has encouraged people to purchase consumer items rather than to keep savings (Graham-Brown, 1984a).

4.5 House characteristics

The final section of this chapter will explore the housing characteristics such as house size, house ownership and the levels of rents.

The study indicated that 75% of all households owned their own houses. The percentages differ in rural and urban areas (92.5% and 65.7% respectively). All the houses in refugee camps were erected by UNRWA. The differences in house ownership between rural and urban areas may be attributed to several factors.

1. The price of land in urban areas is quite high while in rural areas most people are land owners.
2. The accessibility of houses for rent in the urban areas is greater than in rural areas.
3. As a result of cultural values and norms, people in rural areas give first priority to the establishment of homes more than do people in urban areas where renting is quite common. In rural areas, success and happiness is measured by the ownership of items such as homes, cars, televisions, etc., rather than in socio-professional advancement.

Table 4.16

Percentage of house ownership in rural and urban areas.

| AREA | OWNED | RENTED |
|---|---|---|
| Rural | 92.5 | 7.5 |
| Urban | 65.7 | 34.3 |
| Total | 75.4 | 14.7 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

The level of rents reflects the supply and demand for houses in different types of environment. The level of rents according to the survey seemed to be low compared with other Arab countries. For example, 54.1% of household tennants paid less than 25 J.D. per month while about 15% of tennants paid between 25-49 J.D. monthly.

The average number of rooms per household was 3.1, with little difference between rural and urban areas. The average number of rooms in the refugeee camps was 2.4. Jabr (1989) found that a family of four or five members in a refugee camp was likely to have only two rooms of 12 square meters. It is important to mention that the size of rooms, the type of building and the material used in construction differ from one area to another. It is possible to measure the density of house occupance by dividing the number of people by the number of rooms. The results reveal that about 2 people occupy one room. This relatively low density may be due to effect of migration and the changes in the extended family structure system.

Table 4.17

Percentage distribution of households by monthly rent (Jordanian dinar J.D.) in rural and urban areas.

| AREA | < 25 J.D. | 25-49 J.D. | 50-74 J.D. | > 75 J.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rural | 66.8 | 7.5 | 25.7 | 0.0 |
| Urban | 46.0 | 34.0 | 19.7 | 0.3 |
| Total | 54.1 | 14.7 | 21.3 | 0.1 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 4.18 shows that a high proportion of households in the refugee camps (43.4) lived in two rooms, while in rural areas about 60% of the household lived in two or three rooms. In urban areas the situation is better where more than half of all households lived in three or four rooms. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that accommodation conditions in urban areas are better than in rural areas, while the housing conditions in rural areas are superior to those in the refugee camps.

Table 4.18

The distribution of households by house size (%).

| AREA | NUMBER OF ROOMS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6+ | Average |
| Rural | 5.8 | 26.5 | 34.2 | 20.2 | 8.3 | 5.0 | 3.1 |
| Urban | 10.0 | 21.0 | 26.7 | 25.0 | 11.3 | 6.0 | 3.2 |
| Refugee camps | 13.0 | 43.4 | 32.3 | 10.1 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 2.4 |
| Total | 7.8 | 26.5 | 31.7 | 20.6 | 8.5 | 4.8 | 3.1 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The results presented in this chapter indicate that the West Bank population composition although similar in terms of some aspects of its population structure to most developing countries is distinctive and in many respects unique because of its political and geographical context. For example, it has been shown that young people (under 15 years) constitute a lower percentage of the total population than might be expected, and the elderly also constitute only a small proportion. This age structure affects the dependency ratio of the society. The sex ratio for the age group 15-64 is 92 males for every 100 females. This provides evidence of migration selectivity. The result indicates that the proportion of young people is smaller than expected. As the result of high fertility, the household sizes are still very large, with 60% of the household having 5 to 10 members.

Educational characteristics are considered to be an important variable in determining the demographic behaviour. The survey results indicate that the proportion of Palestinians pursuing higher education is very high compared with other developing countries. The most important issue arising from this is the changing attitudes towards female education. The direct effect of this educational surge on the demographic situation will be manifested in the rising female age at marriage and the changes which can be expected to follow in people's views

about childbearing behaviour.

The proportion of female employment is very low as compared with other countries. Culture factors still discourage women from working outside their homes and in a mixed environment with males. Most females are still performing unpaid work within their household, or helping their parents with agricultural work. This situation may strengthen the dominant role of males in the family decision making. It also makes females'priority centred on childbearing.

The chapter has shown that the majority of the West Bank population receive a moderate income. Most of this income is brought in by the head of the household. About one quarter of West Bank households face occasional financial difficulties as compared with about 8% who face permanent financial problems. The survey results suggest that on average there are two persons to a room in Palestinian households, and that West Bankers give priority to building houses either before or immediately after marriage. More than 75% of West Bank households own their houses.

The differences between areas (rural, urban and refugee camps) are quite large. These variations themselves help to explain some of the geographical differences which exist in attitudes towards childbearing behaviour and family formation.

# CHAPTER 5

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON MARRIAGE PATTERNS

## 5.1 Introduction

Social customs and norms in West Bank society underwent a remarkable change in the twentieth century. The process of change was accelerated by the introduction of new schools and higher education institutions, the influence of Western culture, political factors such as the military occupation and the high level of forced migration, new job opportunities in Israel's labour market, as well as more diffuse aspects of socio-economic development. The effect of these factors differ from one area to another as well as between different groups in each area.

It is generally assumed that marriage patterns are influenced to a varying degree by education levels, socio-cultural patterns, family cohesiveness and the nature of marriage arrangements. This chapter will explore and analyse the relationship between these various factors and marriage patterns in the West Bank. In particular the chapter investigates the scale of marriage between relatives and the age at marriage of both males and females. It will also investigate the changes which have taken place in these events and in the attitudes of couples in different areas and in different groups with relation to changes in cultural values and customs.

The importance of studying marriage patterns and the

variations which exist between sub-areas and groups is immensely great for the study of fertility behaviour, because marriage constitutes the basis of family formation and the starting point for most child bearing couples.

## 5.2 Marriage arrangements: cultural dimension

In the Muslim world, marriage has been interpreted as a family affair, sanctioned by society in full anticipation that normal people should ultimately be married. By making a choice about their son's partner, the parent contributes towards reinforcing traditional values of parental authority and dependence (Wittfogel, 1953). In Arab societies, the father's dominance and influence over his family is much greater than in the West, and only a very few young people would dare to defy their parents and marry those of their own choice without their parents consent. Such independence of action would normally occur only amongst people who have lived in western countries and who marry western women. The case is very different for Palestinians who live outside the West Bank in other Arab countries, but who still have their parents in Palestine. In this situation, both males and females need to obtain the blessing of their parents before initiating their marriage.

Marriage without the approval of the family is totally unacceptable in some Arab and Islamic societies. When it happens, the effects of breaching social norms and traditions are strongly felt by the bride and groom after

marriage. For example, in many instances, sons or even daughters, are excluded from inheritance of family wealth and are looked down upon by the community at large, for their deviations from the social equilibrium.

Segregation between the sexes is a major mechanism which reinforces traditional values and norms with regard to arranged marriages, since it reduces the opportunity for self selection of spouses. Segregation between the sexes has been based upon Islamic teaching and traditions (May, 1980). According to Peristiany (1965), any contact between males and females in Arab cultures is potentially dangerous and might lead to sexual affairs. For this purpose, seclusion and segregation have been carefully maintained in the Arab world for protection of females and to sustain family honour.

The socially imposed segregation on unmarried people makes it difficult for them to fall in love without the categorical consent of the head of the family. This is especially so for girls. Consequently, the opportunity for men and women to make marriage arrangements on their own seems minimal. Although Islamic teaching urges segregation, yet Islam gives males and females the chance to see each other in the presence of their families prior to the making of the marriage contract. Islam also places the final decision in the hands of the girl whether or not to accept her proposed partner.

Couples often get to know each other through arrangements made with close relatives or friends. The

advent of Universities, female employment, and the political role played by women as a result of the prevailing situation have all contributed to the gradual emancipation of women from the strictest traditional norms and values.

In the West Bank, as well as in most Arab countries, Islamic teaching remains the basis for the maintenance and cohesiveness of the Arab family. Therefore, marriage and other family affairs are still subject to Islamic courts under Islamic "sharia" law. This may be considered by some as an impediment to social change in most of the Arab and Islamic world. Despite the rigid system confirmed by traditional and religious values concerning the mixing of the sexes in public places, changes on a limit scale have taken place in the West Bank (Hadded, 1980) especially amongst educated urban families and amongst the wealthy with western backgrounds. Some of the younger generation have started to meet in public and in private to talk with one another before marriage.

There are several reasons for the practice of pre-arranged marriages in the West Bank:

1. Communication difficulties between the sexes make it difficult for males to chose their partners.
2. Tradition stipulates that marriage takes place under the direction of the husband's family. The man is expected to formally request the consent of his father in law before marriage, even though in some cases

marriage is pre-arranged at the time of a girl's birth (betrothal).

3. Tradition in the West Bank demands explicitly that marriage should be initiated by the couples' parents, ruling out therefore any possibility of self-selection by spouses.

4. In some cases marriage is seen as an economic security. A rich family will want to make sure that sons and daughters will marry brides and bridegrooms of their same status. This is assured by the mechanism of the bride price (dowry) demanded by rich families ensuring that not every one can marry a daughter from their family.

5. Sometimes the family contributes to the dowry of the bride, but if the prospective husband has adequate savings for the dowry, and is economically independent, he might be able to marry without a family arrangement. However, he may later be chastised by his family and may be punished through disinheritance (Rosenfeld, 1957).

6. It is unlikely for the parents of the girl to agree to a man's request for their daughter's hand without the presence of his father and in some cases members of his extended family.

The families start to seek suitable partners for their sons whenever they reach a marriageable age. In most cases families carry out all marriage arrangements on behalf of their sons' and without their prior knowledge of

the subject, especially when the prospective boy does not show any intention to marry. The male and female must obey their parents decision and consent to their arrangement as a result of cultural and Islamic teachings which emphasise the importance of loyalty and obedience to parents.

The search for a wife is usually initiated at the request the son's father. In many cases, sisters, aunts and mothers pay visits to the prospective wife's home. During the visit, more attention will be paid to the girls behaviour especially to her interactions with her parents or other members of the family. Interestingly, in many instances, the girl does not even have the slightest idea of the purpose of the visit (Daghestani, 1968).

According to Goode (1963), traditional views of the appropriate wife require her to embody the qualities of honour, a good reputation, appropriate ancestry and pleasant physical appearance. However, the prophet Mohammed in his "Hadith" simply stated that:

> "A women is married for four things: her wealth, family status, beauty and her religion. He who does not marry the religious woman will be a loser" (Khan, 1978).

Sometimes the son's family has no choice in seeking a partner for their son, especially when a suitable girl from the extended family is found. As the old Arabic saying goes "Ibn El Am Bitayyeh An Al Faras". That is "Your

uncle's son always has first priority".

Sarhan (1976) in his study on Palestinians residing in Kuwait, found that 71% of the men in his sample had entrusted their mothers with their choice of partners. The remainder had made their own choice and convinced their parents or relatives to arrange the marriage of their choice.

West Bank culture is harder on women than on men because of the obsession with honour. Women have less chances to participate in selecting their partners (Haddad, 1980). The opinions of her father and family are decisive in the selection of a male partner. Frequently, the girl's family arranges her marriage without prior discussion with her. This procedure is not congruous with Islamic teaching.

> "If a man arranges the marriage of his daughter without her agreement, the whole marriage will be unacceptable". Hadith (Khan, 1978)

According to Islamic law and Arab culture men have the right to marry more than one wife under specific conditions. In the West Bank the proportion of men who have more than one wife is very small. In this present study, the researcher found that only 1.8% of married men had more than one wife. Of these two thirds were more than 50 years old. The reasons given were:

1. Conflict between him and his first wife's family.
2. The first wife proved infertile.
3. The first wife was disobedient to her husband and his

family.

## 5.3 Couples characteristics and methods of acquaintance

Turning now to the survey it is possible to investigate the validity of many of the generalisations stated earlier. Table 5.1 shows that the majority of women (about 62%) were married to men without there having been any previous personal relationship. In villages and towns relatives often live close to each other and therefore they interact more strongly for purely social and economic reasons. The more cohesive structure of the extended family in rural areas also permits greater contact between potential spouses. Only a small percentage of women in the sample (2.6%) married men whom they came to know through their work or through their studies.

Table 5.1

Husbands and wives methods of acquaintance by place of residence. (Percentages).

| | In schools & colleges | At work | Through relatives | Did not know him before |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | 1.0 | 1.6 | 35.2 | 62.1 |
| Small villages | 0.3 | 0.3 | 40.0 | 59.3 |
| Towns | 2.3 | 0.7 | 40.3 | 56.7 |
| City, lower class | - | 1.0 | 26.0 | 73.0 |
| City, middle class | - | 3.0 | 32.0 | 65.0 |
| City, upper class | - | 3.0 | 25.0 | 72.0 |
| Refugee camps | 2.0 | 6.0 | 28.5 | 63.0 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

From a cursory glance at table 5.2, one can notice a negative relationship between the wife's age and the likelihood of her getting to know her husband through kinship links before marriage. The percentage decreases from 46% in the oldest generation to 25% for the youngest. Inversely, the proportion of women who did not know their husbands before marriage increases gradually from 52.7% in the oldest generation to 70% in youngest generation. These remarkable findings attest the continued significance of social norms in the making of marriage arrangements. The trend may be partially explained by the rising proportion of the population living in urban environments, where kinship links operate less well in introducing spouses to one another before marriage.

Table 5.2

Husband and wife's methods of acquaintance by wife's age.

| Wife's age | In schools & colleges | At work | Through relatives | Did not know him before |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| More than 50 years | 0.1 | 0.9 | 46.3 | 52.7 |
| Between 30-50 years | 0.2 | 1.0 | 34.4 | 62.7 |
| Less than 30 years | 2.6 | 3.3 | 25.0 | 70.0 |
| Total population | 1.0 | 1.6 | 35.2 | 62.1 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

As for the influence of education on marriage arrangements, Table 5.3 indicates that although highly educated women may have greater freedom to reject their potential partners, the majority still married men whom they had not previously known. The proportion of women who

were married to relatives decreases from 44.7% among illiterate women to 24.3% among highly educated women. But the most remarkable finding of Table 5.3 remains the fact that the percentage of women who married strangers (men not known before marriage) actually increased with increases in the educational level attained. This can be attributed to the following: Highly educated females have their own views regarding their potential partners. As mentioned earlier the decision and opinions of educated females are more respected and more welcomed by the members of their family. As a result, they are normally selective in their choice with regard to their partners. For example, a highly educated female may be willing to accept a stranger because of his qualifications and status while being inherently opposed to marriage to a relative. Less educated women were still in many cases forced to marry relatives.

Table 5.3

Husbands and wifes methods of acquaintance by educational levels. (Percentages).

| Wifes educational level | In schools & colleges | At work | Through relatives | Did not know him before |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Illiterate | - | 0.3 | 44.7 | 55.0 |
| *Low education | 0.1 | 0.4 | 36.9 | 62.6 |
| **Middle education | 0.3 | 1.4 | 34.9 | 63.4 |
| ***High education | 3.8 | 4.5 | 24.3 | 67.4 |
| Total population | 1.0 | 1.6 | 35.2 | 62.1 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.
* elementary and preparatory
** secondary
*** college, university

## 5.4 Age at Marriage

Age at marriage remains an important variable in any comprehensive study on demography (McCarthy, 1982). Demographic studies have shown that the differences in age at marriage can account for substantial variations in fertility behaviour, and that changes in age at marriage have had a dramatic influence on fertility levels through changing the length of exposure to the risk of childbearing.

The process of socio-economic development and demographic changes always take place at different rates among different sub-groups of any society. Therefore, when studying the pattern of age at marriage it is important to consider the extent to which these patterns differ within a population, and to assess why certain segments of the population are experiencing demographic change more rapidly than others.

### 5.4.1 Age at marriage and place of residence

Forces affecting how marriages are arranged, changing levels of educational attainment and many other factors reviewed in chapter 5 impinge upon the age at first marriage. Table 5.4 shows the survey results for the mean age at marriage for males. This was 25.6 years while for females it was only about 19 years. The youngest male found in the sample was married at the age of 14 years as compared with the youngest female who married at the age of 12 years. The highest mean for male age at marriage was

found in the city middle class area (27.6 years) reflecting male ambitions to reach a higher standard of living prior to marriage. By contrast the high mean age at marriage amongst the city's lower class (27.7 years) must be attributed to the financial difficulties faced by males who need to save money in order to be able to pay the demanded bride price.

Table 5.4

Mean age at marriage in different areas.

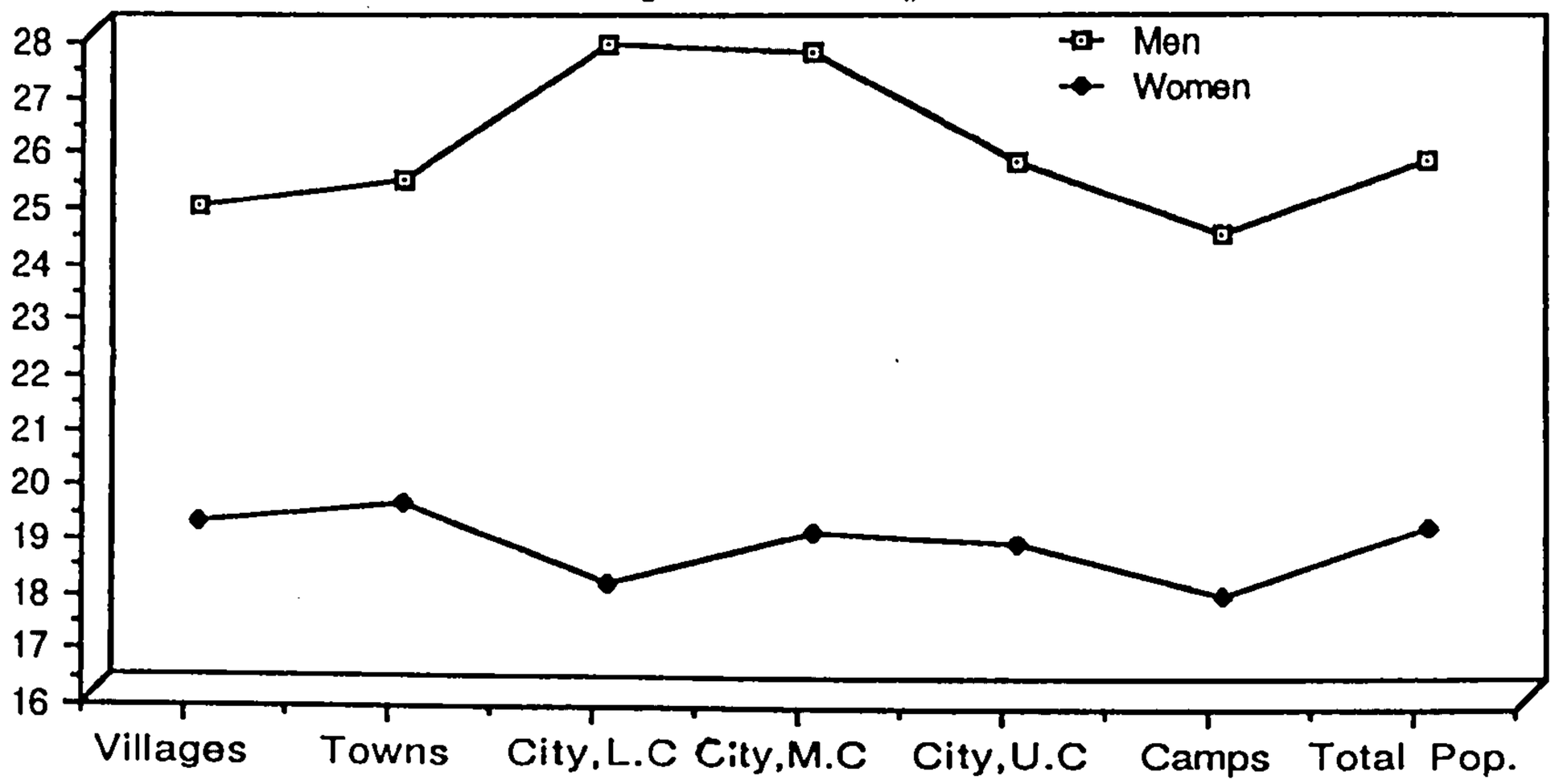
| Area | Men | | Women | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Average | Standard deviation | Average | Standard deviation |
| Small villages | 24.8 | 5.7 | 19.1 | 3.5 |
| Towns | 25.3 | 5.7 | 19.4 | 4.2 |
| City lower class | 27.7 | 5.7 | 18.0 | 3.5 |
| City middle class | 27.6 | 6.9 | 18.9 | 3.5 |
| City upper class | 25.6 | 5.8 | 18.7 | 3.6 |
| Refugee camps | 24.3 | 5.0 | 17.8 | 3.1 |
| Total population | 25.6 | 3.1 | 19.0 | 3.8 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Among females, the mean age at marriage fluctuated between 17.8 years in refugee camps and 19.4 years in the towns. The mean age at marriage in rural areas appeared to be higher than in urban areas. This may be due to the greater importance of marriage between relatives. As a result females normally wait for their male relatives to

come and ask for their hands.

Figure 5.1: Mean age at marriage.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 5.4.

Table 5.5 and 5.6 examine the distribution of age at marriage in different sub areas. It is noted from the table that about 40% of women in the sample were married before reaching the age of 18 as compared with 2.4% for men. The proportion of women who married after the age of 25 years was less than 6%, compared with nearly 40% of men. Regarding the differences between sub areas, it can be noted from table 5.5 that males in rural areas married at earlier ages than their urban counterparts. The proportion of males in rural areas who married before the age of 20 years is 11% (12.3% in small villages and 9.2% in towns) compared with 6.3% in urban areas. The highest

percentage of late marriages were found amongst the city's middle and lower classes (10% and 13% respectively). On the other hand, the proportion of urban women who married before the age of 20 years was 67.4%, higher than amongst rural women (57%). The highest percentage of females marrying before the age of 20 years was found in refugee camps (78%) while the lowest percentage was found in towns (55%).

The differences in age at marriage between male and female can be attributed to cultural influences which favour women being younger than their husbands. Women are also encouraged to marry early for reasons associated with their honour. The differences between the different areas can be explained by some of the following factors:

1. Marriage costs are higher in cities than in towns and villages.
2. In cities, a wife is unlikely to dwell with the family of her husband, unlike wives in towns and villages where the majority of them do not object to living with the husband's family.
3. The standards of living are higher in cities than in towns and villages, and this may be due to the structure of cities, which required more saving of money for facing the high demands of city life.
4. In the villages or towns, wives may co-operate with their husbands viz a viz work in agriculture. Therefore, the bride is considered to be additional labour force to the family.

Table 5.5

Distribution of female age at marriage for those "currently married" by different sub areas (percentage).

| | FEMALE | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | >40 |
| Small village | 1.0 | 15.7 | 18.7 | 23.6 | 19.3 | 9.0 | 7.7 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.3 | - | - | - | - |
| Town | 2.7 | 10.3 | 22.3 | 19.7 | 14.6 | 11.4 | 10.0 | 5.3 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | - |
| City, lower c. | 3.0 | 25.0 | 23.0 | 21.0 | 10.0 | 8.0 | 7.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| City, middle c. | 1.0 | 19.0 | 18.0 | 21.0 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 4.0 | 2.0 | 3.0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| City, upper c. | 1.0 | 23.0 | 24.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 3.0 | - | 1.0 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Refugee camps | 3.0 | 24.2 | 25.2 | 7.1 | 8.1 | 6.1 | - | 1.0 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Rural | 1.8 | 13.0 | 20.5 | 21.7 | 17.0 | 10.2 | 8.9 | 4.3 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | - | - |
| **Urban | 2.0 | 22.8 | 22.5 | 20.6 | 12.0 | 10.3 | 6.6 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 0.3 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 1.9 | 16.9 | 21.3 | 21.2 | 15.0 | 10.4 | 7.9 | 3.3 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | - | - |

* Small villages and towns
** City, lower, middle and upper class and refugee camps.

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 5.6

Distribution of male age at marriage for those "currently married" by different sub areas "percentages".

| | MALE | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | >40 |
| Small village | - | 0.3 | 3.0 | 9.0 | 12.6 | 17.0 | 24.7 | 12.7 | 6.3 | 8.0 | 3.0 | - | 1.4 | - | 1.8 |
| Town | - | 0.3 | 2.3 | 6.6 | 12.0 | 14.7 | 25.0 | 14.3 | 10.3 | 6.7 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 2.2 |
| City, lower c. | - | - | 2.0 | 9.0 | 4.0 | 12.0 | 17.0 | 11.0 | 16.0 | 7.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 6.0 |
| City, middle c. | - | - | - | 2.0 | 8.0 | 12.0 | 17.0 | 20.0 | 18.0 | 6.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 5.0 |
| City, upper c. | - | - | 4.0 | 4.0 | 11.0 | 18.0 | 14.0 | 19.0 | 12.0 | 8.0 | 7.0 | 1.0 | - | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Refugee camps | - | - | - | 4.0 | 12.2 | 32.4 | 19.2 | 17.2 | 7.1 | 5.0 | 3.0 | - | - | - | - |
| *Rural | - | 0.3 | 2.7 | 7.8 | 12.3 | 15.8 | 24.9 | 13.5 | 8.3 | 7.4 | 2.1 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 2.0 |
| **Urban | - | - | 1.5 | 4.8 | 8.8 | 18.6 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 13.3 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 3.3 |
| Total | - | 0.2 | 2.2 | 6.8 | 10.9 | 16.9 | 21.6 | 14.8 | 10.3 | 7.0 | 3.1 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 0.9 | 2.5 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

5. The availability of higher educational institutions in the city.

5.4.2 Education and age at marriage

The demographic literature reviewed in chapter 1 revealed that there is a direct relationship between level of education and age at marriage: i.e. the lower the level of education the lower the mean age at marriage. Table 5.7 shows that this relationship holds for the West Bank population under study. This relationship is examined using statistical tests of association later in the chapter. The proportion of uneducated and poorly educated men who married before the age of 22 was about 27%. This percentage decreased to 15.9% among people with medium levels of education and to 5.7% among males with higher levels of education. About 50% of uneducated and poorly educated females were married before reaching the age of 18 as compared with 20% of wives who achieved medium levels of schooling and 5% of females with higher levels of education.

After marriage, West Bank females usually discontinue their education. This is mainly due to the fact that pursuit of further education and employment are regarded by some as incompatible with marriage. Women's attitudes towards the education and marriage of their sons and daughters is discussed later in the chapter. The survey showed a clear gender split in people's aspirations for their children's future. More than 80% of wives wanted their sons to achieve higher education prior to getting

Table 5.7
Distribution of age at marriage for those currently married by level of education "percentages".

MALE

| | AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | 40+ |
| Illiterate | - | - | 3.2 | 4.5 | 15.9 | 14.6 | 15.9 | 10.6 | 8.3 | 9.5 | 3.2 | 2.5 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 7.4 |
| *Low education | - | 0.4 | 3.2 | 9.3 | 12.0 | 17.4 | 21.6 | 12.8 | 9.3 | 6.5 | 2.6 | 0.8 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 2.0 |
| **Middle education | - | - | - | 6.1 | 9.8 | 18.4 | 22.0 | 16.6 | 10.4 | 6.1 | 5.6 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| ***High education | - | - | 0.6 | 1.1 | 4.0 | 16.1 | 26.4 | 23.0 | 15.0 | 6.8 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 1.7 | - | 1.2 |

FEMALE

| | AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | 40+ |
| Illiterate | 4.6 | 21.8 | 22.7 | 16.8 | 12.6 | 8.6 | 6.7 | 2.7 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | - | - | - |
| *Low education | 1.0 | 22.2 | 26.0 | 24.9 | 12.9 | 5.5 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 0.7 | - | - | - | 0.2 | 0.2 | - |
| **Middle education | - | 2.0 | 17.9 | 31.8 | 19.9 | 11.9 | 10.0 | 3.3 | 2.7 | 0.7 | - | - | - | - | - |
| ***High education | - | 2.0 | 2.9 | 4.8 | 24.3 | 32.1 | 25.3 | 7.8 | 1.0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

* elementary and preparatory levels
** secondary
*** college, university and postgraduate

*Source: Author's survey, 1988.*

married. In contrast, about 66% of wives favoured early marriage for their daughters. Therefore, it is clear that most wives in the sample desire higher levels of educational attainment for their sons than for their daughters. Only 13% of wives supported the idea that their sons should be married before entering employment.

### 5.4.3 Respondents age and their age at marriage

Age at marriage in the West Bank is clearly a feature of society which is changing rapidly. To examine this it was decided to evaluate the age of marriage of men and women from different cohorts in the population (Table 5.8). From the table it can be noted that the proportion of men between 30 and 50 years who married before the age of 22 was lower than for other age groups. This may be so because the older generation had lower levels of education while the younger generation has gained limited wealth because of the accessability of the Israeli labour market. The relatively high salaries in the Israeli labour market (Al-Araj, 1989) has encouraged these young adults to leave school early and to earn sufficient money to permit their marriage. The lower proportion of middle aged respondents who married at an early age (less than 22 years) in part is a result of the scarcity of jobs which existed during the period of control by the Jordanian regime This scarcity forced the majority of males to pursue their education so that they could scale better and more prestigious jobs. In the West Bank, as in Jordan, anyone

Table 5.8

Distribution of age at marriage for those currently married by three main age groups (percentages).

MALE
AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

| Current age | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | 40+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Old | - | 0.6 | 2.6 | 8.2 | 12.1 | 13.7 | 19.2 | 10.7 | 8.4 | 8.9 | 3.4 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 1.4 | 6.5 |
| **Middle | - | - | 2.6 | 4.8 | 8.3 | 16.6 | 20.3 | 18.1 | 12.6 | 7.4 | 4.6 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| ***Young | - | - | 0.5 | 7.3 | 13.5 | 23.2 | 28.2 | 15.9 | 11.4 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

FEMALE
AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

| Current age | <14 | 14-15 | 16-17 | 18-19 | 20-21 | 22-23 | 24-25 | 26-27 | 28-29 | 30-31 | 32-33 | 34-35 | 36-37 | 38-39 | 40+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Old | 5.5 | 25.8 | 20.9 | 15.0 | 15.9 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 0.5 | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Middle | 1.6 | 17.7 | 23.7 | 19.1 | 13.2 | 9.2 | 7.2 | 4.7 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | - |
| ***Young | 0.3 | 11.0 | 18.7 | 27.2 | 16.7 | 13.1 | 9.6 | 2.5 | 0.8 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

* people over 50 years old
** people who are between 30 and 50 years old
*** people less than 30 years old
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

seeking a government sector or professional job must produce a secondary examination certificate (Tawjihi).

Since women in the West Bank do not have any financial responsibility with regard to their marriage, their distribution of age at first marriage is very different from that of men. The proportion of wives in the younger generation who married at an early age (before reaching 18 years) was 30% as compared with 43% and 52% for middle and older generations respectively. This suggests that female age at marriage has increased through time and as a result the period of female childbearing has become shorter, thus influencing potential family size.

As table 5.12 shows, later in the chapter, more than half of the wives in the sample strongly favoured early marriages for their daughters, while only one third discouraged their daughters from marrying at an early age. For the purpose of the attitudinal questions an "early age at marriage" was defined as 16 years old or younger. It is difficult to determine the precise reasons for the high proportion of wives who supported an early marriage for their daughters. It might be attributed to the wives' fear of their daughters not finding a suitable partner.

In West Bank culture a husband is normally some years older than his wife. This can be explained by the following reasons:-

1. Husbands believe that younger wives will be more obedient.

2. Younger wives are believed to be more capable of bearing more children.
3. Younger wives are judged to be physically more capable of looking after their husbands, especially when they become old.
4. Younger wives are more sexually appealing to their husbands.

These factors are reinforced by a female preference for older husbands. Over 80% of women in the study believed that husbands should be older than their wives.

5.5 Marriage between relatives

The practice of maintaining family ties through kinship marriage has been common in most Arab countries. In the West Bank there is a general concensus that marriage between relatives is preferable to exogamous counterparts (Ata, 1986). Kinship marriages within Arab society pre-date Islam. Until this century, in most Arab countries most marriages take place within a tribe or clan between relatives, and in many cases marriages being organised by parents at the time of their children's birth. In spite of Islamic teaching which encourages marriage from outside the extended family, traditional marriage behaviour remains dominant even in the late 20th century.

Preference for endogamous marriage is most prevalant amongst certain social groups in the West Bank. Studies of marriage customs in Arab society, including those of Palestinian society, have found that few if any changes have taken place in the search behaviour of people seeking

spouses (Goode, 1963; Grangvist, 1935).

The differences of marriage patterns between Palestinian camps, villages and cities relate to the different basis of social organisation of each of these areas. Villages and camps often have a highly cohesive structure and the extended family is still the basis of social life (Sirhan, 1977). This is not true of the city.

Shamir (1980) found that intermarriage between refugees and non-refugee Palestinians was almost non-existent because non-refugees refused to marry off their daughters to men from refugee camps as they were regarded as inferior because of their low standards of living and their insecure financial and economic situation.

In spite of the relative stability and continuity of kinship marriages, some changes have emerged. The reduction in the practice of endogamous marriage may be partly explained by the increased scale of emigration of young people to more economically stable and better social environments. When male workers have become more free in their movements and actions, they have also become more independent in making personal decisions. The diffusion of education for both males and females has also made the younger generation more flexible and less obedient to their families especially with regard to the aspects of marriage.

Nevertheless, kinship marriages constitute a salient feature of the Palestinian society. Grangvist (1935) in his study on Palestinian villages found that 33.7% of his

sample were kinship marriages of whom 23.5% had married relatives from the same village. Fifty years later the figures on kinship marriages derived from the author's survey show only slight differences.

Apart from being from the same religion, there are other criteria that can be used in determining the appropriateness and compatibility of a wife. Such criteria include the wife's social class and personal qualities. The usual pattern is to marry the daughter of an uncle, that is the daughter of ones father's brother. If, however, this is not possible, then the closest cousin will be considered.

Many reasons have been provided for this preference pattern:-

1. Marriage between cousins is believed to cause fewer personal and social problems for the husband and his family.
2. Marriage between relatives helps to maintain and strengthen the existing kinship ties and cohesiveness between families.
3. It helps preserve property rights within the family (Michaelson and Goldschmidt, 1971).
4. The dowry in case of kinship marriages is lower than in other cases.

Marriage preference between cousins is best expressed in Arab proverbs such as "a male cousin comes first" and "the wife who is a cousin can put up with austerity but a wife who is not kin needs to be looked after". These

proverbs are used in order to provide support for kinship marriages.

5.5.1 Kinship marriages and place of residence

To examine the differences between the different sub areas, Table 5.9 indicates that marriages between close cousins are viewed as more advantageous than marriages between other people in an extended family. More than one quarter of the couples in the sample were married to close relatives. The lowest percentage of relative marriages was found in the city upper classes (29%) of whom 23% married close relatives and 6% other relatives. The highest percentage of couples who married from within the extended family ("hamulah") was found in rural areas (48%).

Urban people are more likely to marry other urban residents to whom they are not related. In the upper classes marriage takes place between rich families while in the middle classes people usually seek highly qualified partners. As for the people in the lower classes a high proportion were married to people from other regions of the West Bank.

The results in Table 5.9 support the observations made earlier with respect to kinship marriages. Kinship networks and extended family structures were, not unexpectedly, stronger in rural areas than in urban one's. The figures shown in Table 5.9 are different from those obtained by Rosenfeld (1957) in a study of Palestinian villages living in Israel. Rosenfeld found that about 60%

of marriages were between cousins. Therefore, one can conclude that kinship marriages have become somewhat less important.

Table 5.9

Relationship between married couples by place of residence. (Percentages).

| | KINSHIP RELATIONSHIP | | NO KINSHIP RELATIONSHIP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | COUSINS | OTHER RELATIVES | SAME LIVING AREA | ANOTHER REGION |
| Total population | 27.3 | 15.0 | 30.1 | 27.5 |
| Small villages | 27.3 | 18.3 | 15.0 | 39.3 |
| Towns | 27.0 | 23.3 | 36.0 | 13.7 |
| City, lower class | 30.0 | - | 32.0 | 38.0 |
| City, middle class | 27.0 | 7.0 | 50.0 | 16.0 |
| City, upper class | 23.0 | 6.0 | 46.0 | 25.0 |
| Refugee camps | 30.3 | 12.1 | 20.0 | 17.0 |

$Chi^2$ = 142.26 d.f. = 15 significant at 0.001

The chi square test was carried out on absolute data and not on the closed ratio statistics listed in the table.

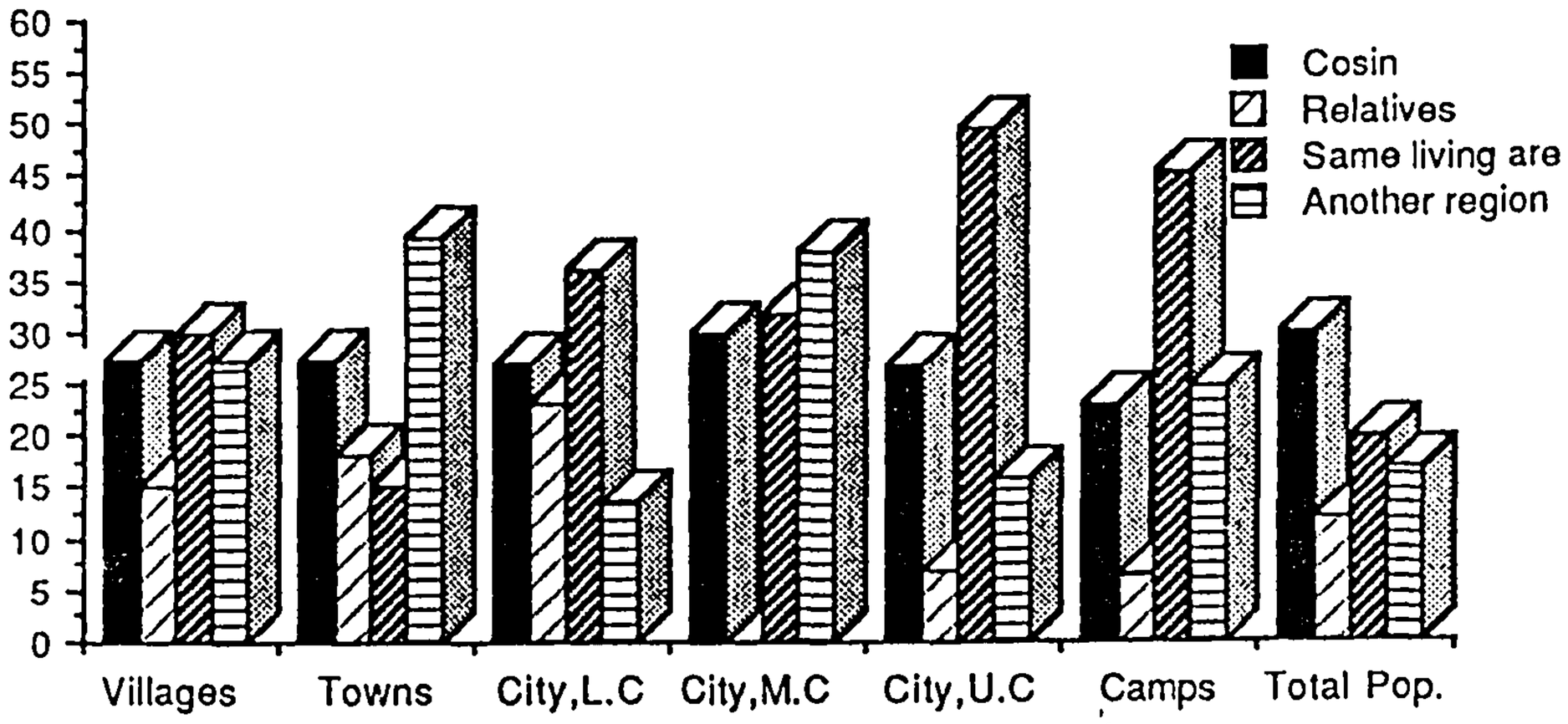
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

### 5.5.2 Differences of kinship marriages

It is important to measure the influence of some variables on kinship marriages for both husbands and wives. The results are shown in Table 5.10. It is noted from the

table that kinship marriage is negatively associated with the educational levels of both men and women. It seems that womens' level of education has an influence on the likelihood of kinship marriage but this is not the case with regard to mens' education attainment, where the proportion of husbands who married relatives decreased gradually from 47.1% among illiterates to 37.9% amongst the highly educated wives respectively. One can conclude that marriage from outside the kinship group is more probable amongst educated couples.

Figure 5.2: Relationship between married couples.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 5.9.

The age of men and women has a negative relationship with kinship marriages. The proportion of men who married relatives increased with age from 37.3% amongst younger men to 48.1% amongst the elderly. This same pattern also holds for women. The $chi^2$ test was applied to both data sets and

indicated the greater statistical significance of the relationship between the ages of wives and marriage of relatives. The $chi^2$ calculated value was 27.21 with 2 degrees of freedom, while the value of $chi^2$ for husbands was 6.93, which is only significant at a low level of confidence.

Table 5.10

Relationship between married couples relative to education, current age and age at marriage. (Percentages).

| | HUSBAND | | WIFE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | From Kinship | Outside Kinship | From Kinship | Outside Kinship |
| Education level | | | | |
| Illiterate | 47.1 | 52.9 | 48.8 | 51.2 |
| Low | 42.1 | 57.9 | 41.0 | 59.0 |
| Middle | 41.1 | 58.9 | 40.4 | 59.6 |
| High | 37.9 | 62.1 | 30.1 | 69.9 |
| Respondent's age | | | | |
| More than 50 | 48.1 | 51.9 | 55.7 | 44.3 |
| Between 30-50 | 39.6 | 60.4 | 41.5 | 58.5 |
| Less than 30 | 37.3 | 62.7 | 34.9 | 65.1 |
| Respondent's age at marriage | | | | |
| Less than 19 | 54.3 | 45.7 | 44.6 | 55.4 |
| Between 19-28 | 45.1 | 54.9 | 40.4 | 59.6 |
| More than 29 | 29.8 | 70.2 | 21.4 | 78.6 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 5.11

$Chi^2$ tests of association with kinship marriages.

| Variables | Chi2 | d.f. | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Husbands education | 3.0 | 3 | 0.091 (not significant) |
| Wives education | 12.4 | 3 | 0.006 (significant) |
| Husbands age | 6.9 | 2 | 0.030 (significant) |
| Wives age | 27.2 | 2 | 0.001 (significant) |
| Husbands age at marriage | 20.3 | 2 | 0.001 (significant) |
| Wives age at marriage | 4.5 | 2 | 0.103 (not significant) |

Source: Author's calculations.

Husbands and wives age at marriage is also negatively associated with kinship marriages. It is noted from Table 5.10 that about half of the couples who married at an early age (less than 19 years) got married to relatives. The proportion of men is higher than that of women. This confirms the idea mentioned earlier that parents decisions are more influential in marriages occurring at an early age. On the other hand, only about 2% of couples who married after reaching 29 years of age were relatives. The statistical results in table 5.11 indicate that husbands age at marriage is statistically significant at a level of 0.001 with 2 degrees of freedom, while wives age at marriage is not statistically significant, which could be interpreted as suggesting that husband's age at marriage is more important in determining kinship marriage patterns. This is true because marriage is usually initiated by men

and not by women in West Bank society.

## 5.6 Parental preference towards children's marriage

It is important to measure and investigate the parental preference towards their children's marriage. As a result of cultural norms and values, it is worth measuring the preferences of men and women separately towards their son's and daughters marriage arrangements.

Table 5.12 indicates that less than 20% of parents wanted their children to marry relatives. Husbands are more supportive of kinship marriages because most kinship marriages happen within the father's family in order to help maintain the family structure. Wives favoured independent marriages to a greater extent with 92% of wives suggesting that kinship marriages reduced the wife's freedom (Table 5.13).

Changes in parental attitudes towards kinship marriages may be attributed to several reasons.

1. Most wives are likely to have suffered in some way from the extended family system (Rosenfeld, 1957).
2. In particular the survey confirmed particular problems and difficulties arose in relation to exchange (swap) marriages between families. It was frequently reported that one wife paid the price for the unpleasant behaviour of the other. Table 5.13 indicates that more than 90% of those surveyed were not in favour of exchange marriages.
3. It has been proven that kinship marriages have an adverse effect on children's health. The degree of

risk increases the closer the pattern of inter-marriage. 89% of wives agreed that marriage between relatives had a negative effect on children's health. Islamic teachings and the "Sharia" also urge people to marry non-relatives. The Prophet Mohammad made this clear in his "hadith" when he said:- "Marry strangers so as not to pine" (Khan, 1978).

Table 5.12

Parental preference towards children's marriage arrangements (percentages).

| | From relatives | From same living area | From another region | Free to choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Husband | | | | |
| His sons | 21.1 | 29.3 | 8.4 | 41.1 |
| His daughters | 22.3 | 38.4 | 8.9 | 30.3 |
| Wife | | | | |
| Her sons | 13.3 | 28.1 | 11.6 | 46.9 |
| Her daughters | 17.0 | 38.1 | 12.8 | 32.0 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

It can be seen from Table 5.12 that parents are likely to grant their sons more freedom in marriage selection. This is understood to be as a result of cultural values and norms and due to the Arabs obsession with honour and reputation. Table 5.12 shows that parents preferred their children to marry from within their residential areas more than from other regions. The

findings show that parents particularly favour marriage by their daughters to partners from the same residential areas (38%). For sons the equivalent proportion was only 29%. The reason behind this is probably parent's greater commitment towards their daughters after marriage.

Table 5.13

Wives attitudes towards marriage issues (%).

| Marriage issues | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Favour early female marriage | 52.7 | 13.2 | 15.6 | 18.4 |
| Male higher education is better than marriage | 69.5 | 12.3 | 12.3 | 5.8 |
| The wife should be older than her husband | 8.9 | 8.5 | 42.8 | 39.7 |
| Sons should marry before entering employment | 8.1 | 4.9 | 43.0 | 43.9 |
| Kinship marriages reduce wifes freedom | 73.2 | 18.8 | 2.5 | 5.5 |
| Favour exchange marriages | 4.1 | 4.6 | 49.2 | 42.1 |
| Marriage between relatives negatively affect childrens health | 74.3 | 14.2 | 6.8 | 4.8 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

## 5.7 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the influence of socio-economic and cultural factors on marriage patterns. More specifically, it discussed the three major issues of marriage patterns: marriage arrangement, age at marriage and marriage between relatives. It is evident from the

discussion that marriage arrangements are less influenced by social and economic development than by the norms of Islamic teaching regarding segregation between the sexes and patterns of family structure and authority. Men appear to have a greater freedom than in the past in their choice of partners. Women on the other hand, are still under considerable pressure to accept their family's choice of partner.

The survey revealed, however, that most West Bank families would like to give their children more freedom to select their partners. This may well have direct repercussions on future patterns of childbearing and family planning.

Age at marriage has witnessed substantial change in recent years. Male and female age at marriage has increased as a result of education, changes in parents aspirations, urbanisation, economic development, social change (most couples now prefer to live separately from their parent's families), and the increased value of dowries and expenditure on marriages. The data indicate significant differences in age at marriage between different levels of educational attainment and between different age groups.

Dramatic changes have taken place in the prevalence of marriage between relatives. These changes have been brought about by a range of factors such as the transition from extended to nuclear family structures, the shift from

agricultural work to other sectors, and changes in social and health problems. All these factors make marriage between relatives less favoured among young and educated people. The survey of family attitudes confirms these changes with most families preferring their children to marry non-relatives.

Inevitably, changes in marriage patterns will be followed by changes in fertility levels through the shortening of the potential childbearing span. This trend in turn makes a couple's decisions with regards to childbearing more critical and may favour more independent and more rational decision making in the future.

# CHAPTER 6

# CHILDBEARING BEHAVIOUR: DETERMINANTS AND ATTITUDES

## 6.1 Introduction

Human reproductive behaviour is a complex phenomenon, and it varies greatly within a population. The mechanisms underlying this variation are difficult to distinguish. However, there are substantial differences in fertility related attitudes and behaviour between developing countries with their high fertility, and developed countries with their lower fertility rates. Moreover, factors causing variations in fertility behaviour are difficult to ascertain and require an explanation of socio-economic and cultural dimensions and their interrelationships (Saleh, 1987).

This chapter has two main aims. The first part is devoted to the discussion of the surveys findings of the main determinants of a couples childbearing behaviour. The second part of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of couples attitudes towards their own children's childbearing decisions. This comparative analysis permits analysis of the differences between parents behaviour and the future behaviour of their children.

## 6.2 Childbearing behaviour and cultural norms

Cultural factors and norms play an important role in shaping people's decisions in almost every aspect of life, especially in traditional societies. Childbearing behaviour and the decision to have children are considered

to be central issues in traditional societies. High levels of fertility have tended to be supported and praised by traditional societies and religious teaching (Carvajal and Geithman, 1976). The rationale for this is easy to find in the desire to preserve family lineage and to reproduce society under conditions of high levels of mortality.

Cultural norms can be regarded as rules setting out how people ought to behave, act and feel in particular circumstances or social conditions. Ryder (1973) indicated that the concept of cultural norms serves as a basic explanation for peoples behaviour. On the other hand, some studies (Blake, 1972; Lee, 1974) have argued that family size norms are determined by the type of family structure and the degree of cohesiveness between family members since the continuity and strength of kin groups is dependent on the size of the group.

Most people in developing countries respond to the cultural norms subconciously with little regard for the other considerations (Goldberg, 1980) such as costs and benefits and the actual economic family situation. Many studies (Gustavus and Nam, 1970; Gustavus, 1973; Frohardt-Lane et al., 1977) indicated that attitudes toward childbearing and family size are learned at very early ages. It is worth mentioning that the question of childbearing behaviour sometimes reflects all the individual characteristics, decisions, motives and the impact of cultural norms on respondents behaviour.

Traditional norms are challenged by two main factors:-

1) Rapid population growth has led to pressures on limited resources particularly in the absence of adequate socio-economic development.
2) Modernisation that tends to undermine the role of traditionalism in life by making people more aware of alternative life style, particularly with regard to fertility behaviour.

The cultural norms are often used to explain, predict and interpret trends and variations in reproductive behaviour according to both time (between periods) and location (between regions). Factors causing such variations in childbearing behaviour are difficult to ascertain and require explanation of the complexity of socio-economic and cultural determinants and their interrelationships (Saleh, 1987).

The value given to childbearing in the West Bank has its roots deep in Arab culture which encourages couples to have large families. Marrying and having children have been strongly emphasized both in pre-Islamic and post Islamic eras. The importance of a large family has been advocated not only on religious grounds, but also for socio-economic and psychological reasons.

Islamic teaching constituted the basic and important source of the cultural norms in most Arab and Islamic societies, the fertility level in these societies is remarkably high as shown by the result of the World

Fertility Survey. Also, Weeks (1988) indicates that the average level of childbearing in the Islamic world is 6 children per woman. This resistance of fertility decline in some Arab and Islamic societies may be due to several factors, such as:

1) The childbearing norms considered to be part of Islamic teaching.
2) The use of contraceptives is unfavourable in Islamic teaching.
3) The modest level of socio-economic development which failed to create substantial social changes.
4) Political force has often given people a sense of insecurity about the future. The effect of this factor appears more clear in the case of the West Bank.

## 6.3 Evaluating costs and benefits of children

Economic analysis of childrens costs and benefits which are approriate to western societies might be misleading if applied intact to the developing countries (Cleave, 1974). Economic analysis should consider factors such as social setting, cultural norms and values of having children. In developing countries, parents expect to receive significant support from their surviving sons in old age. In addition, children may provide a cheap labour force and investment with relatively low level of consumption (Vlassoff and Vlassoff, 1980; Bulatao, 1982). There has been a considerable disagreement as to whether children incur benefits or burdens on their parents in

developing countries and traditional societies. Many studies argued that children give more than they take (Cain, 1977; Nag et al., 1978). Other studies suggest that children's costs are higher than their benefits (Vlassoff, 1979; Lindert, 1983).

Childrens' costs include an input of financial costs such as feeding, clothing, health care, education and the maintenance of children for almost two decades, and non-monetary costs such as time, social mobility and problems associated with children's adolescence. However, it is necessary to emphasize that all non-monetary costs in developing countries are of less significance as compared with similar costs in developed countries. One significant reason for such variation in the cost value is attributed to the low ratio of women entering the labour force. Moreover, childrens' benefit to their parents are numerous, some of which may take the form of economic rewards, while others are of a different nature and sometimes are difficult to measure (i.e. social and psychological rewards).

In the West Bank the costs and benefits of having children are difficult to measure. This is so for several reasons:

1) Variations in parents' perception of the benefits of having children. For example, what parent (X) considered to be of benefit might not be considered so by parent (Y). Cost and benefits are "relative measures" depending on family income, children's

consumption patterns and family aspirations. For example, the high cost of child rearing to a poorer family may be regarded as a low cost in a rich one.

2) Measuring costs and benefits in numerical terms is extremely difficult given the qualitative nature of many dimensions of childrearing.

3) It is doubtful whether survey respondents are able to either conceptualise childrearing in purely economic terms or to expresss their views on the topic in a consistant and logical fashion. Responses often reflect rationalisation of events given respondent's hindsight.

In most developing countries, the net rewards of children relative to their parents greatly exceed the costs. Many studies have attempted to explain and examine inter-generational the wealth flows and their effects on the fertility transition (Caldwell, 1976b; Maani, 1990).

To evaluate the level of rewards (children's support of their parents), all wives in the survey were asked if their children were currently more supportive of their parents than children in the past (last generation). The results as shown in table 6.1 reveal that more than half of all wives thought that children in the past were more supportive of their parents. Only about 15% of the wives believed that current support was close or equal to that of the last generation. A high proportion of wives (32.6%) did not give a precise answer to the question because many

of them had young children or no children at all.

The differences in response between the various areas was quite clear (table 6.1). A higher proportion of wives in rural areas (and to some extent wives in refugee camps), believed that child support of parents had been greater in the past. These geographical differences can be attributed to the differential changes in family structure and educational aspirations which have taken place. The differences between the areas was statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 6.1

Children's support of their parents: present and past generations (percentages).

| AREA | LESS | EQUAL/MORE | NO ANSWER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | 51.6 | 15.7 | 32.6 |
| Small villages | 64.6 | 14.7 | 20.7 |
| Towns | 77.0 | 12.3 | 10.7 |
| City, lower class | 16.0 | 23.0 | 61.0 |
| City, middle class | 20.0 | 20.0 | 60.0 |
| City, upper class | 19.0 | 11.0 | 70.0 |
| Refugee camps | 36.4 | 22.2 | 41.4 |

Chi-square = 277 (based on absolute figures)
df = 10 Significance 0.001
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 6.3 Reasons for "benefit" reduction

Only the wives who responded by saying that support by children of their parents was less than in the past, were asked about the reasons behind this change. The

responses were grouped into four main categories as shown in table 6.2. This shows that the main reason given was the increase in the standards and cost of living, which made it more difficult for children to support their parents. The high cost of living was a particular problem for low income families who also favoured early marriage. None of the wives in the city upper classes gave this as a cause.

The second most important reason was that children had become less concerned about traditional norms and customs. The diffusion of education, increased mobility, increased access to the mass media and the current political situation had all militated against the survival of traditional patterns. Those that gave this response were not drawn from any particular area.

The third reason given by wives was that many children now lived far away from their families (outside the West Bank) as a result of migration (voluntary and compulsory) and that this had inevitably undermined patterns of child support. This was particularly the case because:

1) It was difficult for migrants to transfer money to their parents inside the West Bank, because of the absence of Arab banks in the area and because of the Israeli authorities restrictions on the transfer of money.
2) Some of the sons who lived in non-oil countries were unable to provide support for their families in the

West Bank.

3) The sons who lived outside the Arab world (western countries) were becoming less and less concerned with the support of their parents.

The results are contradictory with the findings of Vlassoff and Vlassoff (1980) who indicate that migrants sons have provided their families with better support than non-migrants sons. Their views may be true for a stable situation.

The fourth major reason given was their son's wives discouraged them from supporting their parents. About 4% of the wives thought that this was the case. Most of these responses were from women in the refugee camps and in small villages.

To examine the validity of these responses about the children's benefits to their families, the researcher investigated the effect of changing perceptions on the demand for children. He asked all women who had completed their childbearing period to answer the question "If you returned to the beginning of your married life, would you like to have more, less or the same number of children?"

Some 17.4% of wives would like to have had more children, compared with 30.6% of wives who would have liked to have had less children, while some 46.6% of wives were satisfied with their family size. Only 5.6% of wives responded that they did not know.

Table 6.2

Reasons for a reduction in childrens support of their parents (percentage).

| AREA | CHANGES IN STANDARD OF LIVING | LESS CONCERN ABOUT CULTURAL NORMS | AWAY FROM FAMILY | WIFE PLAYS NEGATIVE ROLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | 39.3 | 30.7 | 25.7 | 4.3 |
| Small villages | 43.3 | 41.2 | 9.3 | 6.2 |
| Towns | 45.3 | 16.3 | 35.8 | 2.6 |
| City lower class | 12.5 | 31.2 | 56.3 | 0.0 |
| City middle class | 15.0 | 40.0 | 45.0 | 0.0 |
| City upper class | 0.0 | 57.9 | 36.8 | 5.3 |
| Refugee camps | 25.0 | 47.2 | 19.4 | 8.4 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

This result supports the conclusion that childbearing behaviour will change in the future and that the womans decision may become more influential in determining demand for children and family size, especially as most of the wives who responded to this question were old aged, poorly educated and had a more restricted view of their traditional culture.

Despite these findings, however, it is important to emphasize that couples awareness of childrens costs and benefits in the West Bank remains firmly in favour of a pro-natalist position. This pro-natalism has been based on reasons other than purely economic ones.

### 6.3.2 Decision making

Fertility decision making is the central focus of many fertility theories (Becker, 1960; Easterlin, 1978) which assume that reproductive behaviour is the response to underlying tastes and constraints. The term "taste" which has been emphasized in economic theories of fertility behaviour (Easterlin, 1975; Leibenstein, 1974) covers a wide range of psychological factors, social norms, culture pressure and personal satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Because of the difficulty in measuring tastes directly, researchers usually choose to inquire into parents perceptions of forces affecting decision-making.

In developing countries decision making on fertility involves many assumptions about the family formation process. In some cases the notion of individual decision making should be ignored and the focus should be concentrated on social decisions (kin group decisions, etc.). In other cases, individual decision making may be very important and effective. This kind of decision often takes the costs and benefits of having children into account under the influence of cultural norms which define the individual's position (Rasul, 1987; U.N. 1981).

The findings of the author's survey indicated that nearly 73% of couples claimed to make their own decisions about childbearing behaviour. 5.6% of the decisions were made by the husbands alone whilst 1.5% of the decisions were made by the wives. In contrast, about 27% of couples regarded their behaviour as reflecting socially determined

norms. This proportion is interesting since it is exactly in line with the proportion of husbands who were against the use of contraceptives by their wives.

Three possible stages exist in fertility decisions; the perception stage, decision about pregnancy and post natal decision making (Hass, 1974). In each of these stages the fertility decision differs because of the complex interaction of different personal and socio-economic conditions accompanied by the demographic circumstances of each decision. It is worth mentioning that couples may pass through some of these stages without taking any decision (for example in the case of childless couples and in the case of couples who bear unwanted children). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all these stages in detail. In what follows below, only the couples perceptions of childbearing and child rearing will be discussed and analysed.

## 6.4 Couples perception of the next generation's childbearing behaviour

Family members, especially parents, have a direct and indirect effect on their own children's childbearing behaviour through:

a) intervention in their decision

b) intergenerational transmission of fertility behaviour norms and values

Gecas (1979), amongst other researchers, has stressed the importance of the relationship between a couples

behaviour and their parents background.

To measure a couples perception towards their own children's childbearing behaviour, all respondents (husbands and wives) were asked the question "How many children would you prefer your children (sons and daughters) to have in the future as compared with your own experience?" Table 6.3 presents the findings. The table shows that about 55% of all husbands in the survey wanted their sons to make their own decisions. It is clear that both husbands and wives were willing in particular to give their daughters more freedom with regards to their future childbearing decisions. It is of course true that in West Bank culture parents have less influence on their married daughters than on their married sons.

A striking feature of the table is that the proportion of men who wanted their own children to have smaller families than they had had was about half the proportion of these who want their children to have more. On the other hand, no such trend was evident amongst the women who were questioned.

The results in table 6.3 lead to the conclusion that children will have more freedom in making childbearing decisions than has been the case in the past. If this proves to be the case, the demand for children may be reduced as a result of the slackening of pessure to conform to social norms set by relatives and parents.

Table 6.3

Couples attitudes towards their children's behaviour as compared with their own experience (percentages).

| | PREFER MORE CHILDREN | PREFER LESS CHILDREN | PREFER EQUAL NO. OF CHILDREN | UP TO THEM TO DECIDE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HUSBAND | | | | |
| Sons | 16.6 | 8.0 | 23.6 | 51.7 |
| Daughters | 14.3 | 5.9 | 15.7 | 64.0 |
| WIFE | | | | |
| Sons | 8.9 | 8.6 | 19.3 | 63.1 |
| Daughters | 6.6 | 9.0 | 15.2 | 69.7 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 6.5 Childbearing motives

Information on reproductive attitudes and motivation may be helpful in understanding the factors affecting the demand for children (Easterlin, 1978). Motives for having children are the result of the complex interaction of a large number of social, economic, cultural and sometimes biological factors. However, Hoffman (1975) has pointed out that motives for having children differ from one group to another and even with the same individual from one time to another. Meade and Singh (1973), for example, has suggested that social considerations proved more important in his analysis of the Indian population, while economic factors were more highly weighted in the childbearing motives of people in developed countries.

Pohlman (1969) has argued that motives in general are determined by cultural norms on one hand, and on the other hand personal evaluations of the value and utility of children. It has been argued, for example, that security in old age in developing countries remains the most important motive for high fertility (Leibenstein, 1974). The findings of the author's study confirm this argument with a high proportion of women (31.1%) indicating child support to elderly parents is a main motive for having children. By contrast Lindert (1980; 1983) considered this motive to be of negligible importance. Nugent (1985) has argued that security in old age can be expected to be a strong influence under some conditions such as those existing in the most underdeveloped countries, where the absence of insurance systems, social security and pensions all greatly increase parental dependence in old age on their children (Kelly et al., 1976; Hohm, 1975).

To determine womens motives, all women in the West Bank survey were asked to indicate the importance of a range of motives for having many children. The author then analysed the most important motive given by each respondent by classifying reasons into four main categories as represented in table 6.4. It can be seen that 58.1% of women attributed having children to socio-economic reasons, such as old age security (31.1%), family cohesiveness (17.9%), improvement of family status (5.3%) and gaining peoples respect (3.8%).

By contrast, 29.2% of wives related their decision to have children mainly to cultural reasons (e.g. 17.9% wanted to have children in order to keep the family name alive; 11.3% of women wanted children so as to inherit family property). Rural women and rich urban families tended to emphasise this kind of motive.

Only 9.9% of women stated that their religious beliefs were the prime factor in child bearing. These women perceived children as a gift from God, and thought the birth of a child would bring blessings, happiness and prosperity. It is important to mention that most religious women thought that Islamic teaching encouraged large families and discouraged the use of contraceptives.

Finally, a small proportion of women (3%) reported having their children because of political reasons. While many may view this as a subsidiary justification about 3% felt it was of primary importance and a national obligation to have more children so as to outnumber the Israeli population, thus giving the Palestinians an advantage in the demographic struggle.

Table 6.4

Motives for having children.

| MOTIVE | NUMBER | % |
|---|---|---|
| Socio-economic | 580 | 58.1 |
| Cultural | 292 | 29.2 |
| Religious | 99 | 9.9 |
| Political | 28 | 2.8 |
| TOTAL | 999 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 6.6 Value of children

The perceived value of children can be measured by examining desired family size. This indicator responds faster than actual fertility levels to changes in fertility intentions (Lee, 1974). Changes in the perceived value of children to their parents constitutes a key element in many theories of fertility transition (Caldwell, 1976b), especially when linked with the modernisation process.

In the author's West Bank survey a number of different approaches were considered for measuring respondents' attitudes towards childbearing behaviour. It is possible, for example, to ask respondents how other people evaluate fertility behaviour and not how they feel about it themselves (Mason, 1983). Secondly, respondents can be asked about their approval and disapproval of particular types of behaviour. This approach is very common in studying respondents attitudes (National Opinion Research Centre, 1980). This latter approach was adopted with respondents being asked to express their attitudes towards childbearing behaviour. All respondents were given ten statements and were then asked for each statment to choose a response that most fully represented their attitude on a scale ranging from 1 to 4 - "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

The ten statements and a summary of the results are listed in Table 6.5.

### 6.6.1 Traditional beliefs

One important motive for having children is the belief that by having children the family name is kept alive, maintaining lineage continuity and preserving family property: without this the family experiences what may be termed "true death". Table 6.5 shows that almost three quarters of wives in the sample agreed with this traditional belief. This is one fact encouraging husbands to divorce childless wives and to re-marry.

For this and other reasons which will be discussed later, women in the past found themselves bearing as many children as possible as a result of the -

a) High infant and child mortality rate.

b) Social prestige and economic benefits of children quite apart from their low costs.

c) The unavailability of contraceptives.

Despite changes in these circumstances, table 6.5 reveals that 43% of wives agreed and strongly agreed with the belief that women should have as many children as possible.

In West Bank culture it is believed by many that a lot of pregnancies have no effect on a wifes health. Inversely, it is thought that if women stop having children for a long time then their chances of becoming pregnant again will be very low. However, due to the increase in education and health awareness, womens views on these matters have changed dramatically. The findings in table

Table 6.5

Wives' attitudes towards childbearing (%).

| ATTITUDES | Strongly agree 1 | Agree 2 | Disagree 3 | Strongly disagree 4 | Mean X | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TRADITIONAL BELIEFS | | | | | | |
| 1. "True death" if the parents die without having children | 48.6 | 27.9 | 17.0 | 8.2 | 1.9 | 1 |
| 2. Childbearing is a woman's main function | 47.7 | 9.7 | 27.2 | 15.3 | 2.1 | 2 |
| 3. Women should have as many children as possible | 17.5 | 25.5 | 27.5 | 29.9 | 2.7 | 3 |
| 4. More pregnancies do not affect a woman's health | 1.5 | 3.7 | 8.9 | 85.9 | 3.8 | 4 |
| CHILDREN AND WOMEN POSITION | | | | | | |
| 1. Having more children puts the woman in a better position in her community | 50.2 | 18.4 | 21.5 | 9.9 | 1.9 | 1 |
| 2. Children prevent fathers from marrying again | 49.0 | 11.2 | 16.0 | 23.7 | 2.1 | 2 |
| BENEFIT OF CHILDREN | | | | | | |
| 1. Children cost more than the resulting rewards | 30.0 | 38.5 | 9.4 | 21.3 | 2.2 | 4 |
| 2. The quality of children is more important the the quantity | 80.3 | 9.7 | 8.7 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 2 |
| 3. Male children provide support for their families far more than do females | 52.9 | 21.6 | 16.8 | 8.7 | 1.8 | 3 |
| 4. The reward from having children decreases with time | 85.0 | 13.7 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 1.2 | 1 |

Source: Author's study, 1988.

6.5 indicate that only 5% of women agree with the latter belief.

Islamic teaching and cultural norms restrict the womens role to the home (Chowdhury, 1980), while the role of men is exercised outside the house in providing support for their families. Compatible with this view, in the West Bank childbearing is, by many, considered to be the main duty of women in addition to their domestic duties. Table 6.5 shows that more than half of the wives surveyed agreed with the belief that "childbearing is the womens main function".

### 6.6.2 Children and womens role

Many cultural reasons were given to explain women's childbearing behaviour. Apart from having children as a symbol of joy, children could be regarded as an economic investment as well as bringing social prestige. This section will be devoted only to the relation between having children and the improvement of a woman's position.

It is argued that one way that women can improve and strengthen their position in West Bank society is through having more children, since a woman with many children will have a more secure relationship with her husband. Women start sharing decisions and therefore their status becomes stronger in the husbands family, especially relative to her mother-in-law. In addition, it is observed that West Bank society shows more respect for women with many children. Table 6.5 shows that about 70% of women concurred with

these views.

In addition, the simplest way for women to evade the pressure and anxiety of a threatened divorce is by having many children. In most cases, children are thought to be the main obstacle to a fathers re-marriage. The results in table 6.5 reveal that about 60% of wives agreed with this and of these about 50% strongly agreed with the statement "children prevent their fathers from marrying again".

### 6.6.3 Benefits of having children

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, children's costs and benefits to their parents are relative to a couples childbearing behaviour and circumstances. It is expected that the perceived net value of children will decrease as the development process increases (Lee and Bulatao, 1983). This development process encompasses changes in family structure, work sectors, and attitudes towards the use of time and family wealth.

Table 6.5 shows that about 70% of wives reported that children cost more than the rewards which they brought. The vast majority (99%) strongly agreed with the view that the rewards of children decreased with time. These attitudes make it clear that the economic returns to parents will through time make parents less motivated to having children out of economic motivations. Thus, it is to be expected that the demand for having children in the future will decrease and fertility rates will decline as the "modernisation" process advances.

The only true substitute for having more children is having children of a different "quality". "Quality" is used in this study following Becker's (1960) definition. Becker considers "high quality" children to be those from whom parents drive higher utility, because of additional expenditure per child. Given a fixed budget and time, parents may make the choice between more children or higher quality children in their decision about ideal family size (Carvajal and Geithman, 1976).

Despite the returns which arise from having children, each child is also an extra mouth to be fed, clothed and educated before entering the labour force and starting to provide for his family and himself. The survey results show that Palestinian women increasingly share this view that the quality of children is more important than the quantity. 90% of wives agreed with this view.

Table 6.5 indicates that 75% of women think that male children are more supportive than females. This positive attitude towards sons may reflect the expectation that sons will be better able to support parents in their old age.

The discussion of women's attitudes towards the benefits provided by children makes it easy to conclude that if women had the chance to become more effective decision makers, then the number of women who would practice family planning would increase rapidly in order to limit the number of children.

## 6.7 Factors influencing women's attitudes

Having examined and discussed women's attitudes to childbearing behaviour, the researcher finds it imperative to examine the major factors affecting women's attitudes and thinking. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used seven variables, including: a woman's age, education, age at marriage and work status, while other variables included their husband's educational level, family income and place of residence. It is necessary to give a brief introduction to the technique used to analyse the relationships between these variables and to define the major statistical terms which will be used throughout the analysis.

### 6.7.1 Discriminant analysis: An Introduction

Discriminant analysis is a multivariate technique. Multiple discriminant analysis (MDA) is relatively new but is increasingly being used by statisticians and social scientists. Its use is well established in the academic research literature (Hair et al. 1984).

The biggest advantage of MDA over regression analysis is that the parametric assumptions of independent variables, a normal distribution and equal variance are avoided. MDA is designed to work with nominal dependent variables which can classify cases into three or more nominal categories, a task that least squares regression analysis cannot handle. However, one limitation of MDA is that it cannot handle well situations where the dependent variable has a large number of values (Hedderson, 1987).

Hair et al. (1984) have argued that MDA is the appropriate statistical technique when the independent variable is categorical and independent variables are metric. The value of using MDA is in determining which independent category a dependent variable is most likely to relate to (Hedderson, 1987).

The main objectives of using discriminant analysis as indicated by Klecka (1980) are:-

1) To determine if statistically significant differences exist between the average score profiles of two or more a prior defined groups.
2) To examine which of the independent variables account most for the differences in the average scores of the two or more groups.

For the purpose of this research the discriminant functional analysis is used as analytical predictive technique. Following Hedderson (1987) some of the key terms used in the analysis include:

Eigen value: An Eigen value measures the variance between groups divided by within group variance. Eigen values are used for evaluating the worth of discriminant analysis. Because the size of the eigen value is related to the discriminating power, then the larger eigen value, the greater the discrimination (Hair et al., 1984).

Conical correlation: This is the ratio of the between groups variance in scores of the function to the total variance in these scores. The scale ranges from 0.0 to

1.0.

Wilks lambda: Called the U statistic. This measures the within group sum of squares divided by the total sum of squares. This ratio ranges from 0.0 to 1.0. The lower the value of Wilks lambda the better is the discriminating power of the model.

Chi-square is a theoretical probability distribution which measures the probability that a difference in observed group values in a sample is due to chance sampling variation when, in fact, there is no difference in the population. Each distribution will have a different shape depending on the "degrees of freedom" associated with the particular problem. One must know the degree of freedom before consulting a table to determine the probability level associated with the computed chi-square.

Standardised discriminant function (SPFC): This indicates that each variable score is standardised before it is multiplied by the coefficient. In standardising a variable score, the mean for that variable is subtracted from the score, and then the differences are divided by the standard deviation of the variable.

6.7.2 Discriminant findings

The findings in table 6.6 indicate that the criteria values for using the statistical model are statistically acceptable and the approach is useful in accounting for women's attitudes towards childbearing behaviour.

Table 6.6

Women's attitudes towards cultural norms about childbearing.

| ATTITUDES | Eigen value | PCT variance | Canonical correlation | Wilks lambda | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional beliefs | 0.2831 | 92.07 | 0.4934 | 0.7321 | 102.0 | 21 | 0.001 |
| Children & womens role | 0.22520 | 87.68 | 0.43357 | 0.7733 | 175.0 | 21 | 0.001 |
| Benefits of children | 0.2670 | 89.06 | 0.4580 | 0.744 | 40.77 | 14 | 0.01 |

Source: Author's calculation.

The results in table 6.7 are represented graphically in figure 6.1. They indicate that wives' traditional beliefs are mostly influenced by their educational level with a SDFC value of 0.48. A woman's age (SDFC value of 0.33) and her husband's education level (SDFC = 0.30) are also a statistically significant influence.

A second factor represented in the model (figure 6.1) is the influence on childbearing attitudes of women's perceptions of their role in childbearing and child rearing. The statistical analysis suggests that women's beliefs that children strengthen and support their role in the household is influenced mainly by their education level, employment status and their husbands educational level with SDFC values 0.22, 0.44 and 0.60 respectively. Finally their attitudes towards the benefits of having children are influenced mainly by their age, employment and

level of family income. Of these variables a wife's age was the most significant in accounting for variation in attitudes (SDFC = 0.85) while employment status was the least significant.

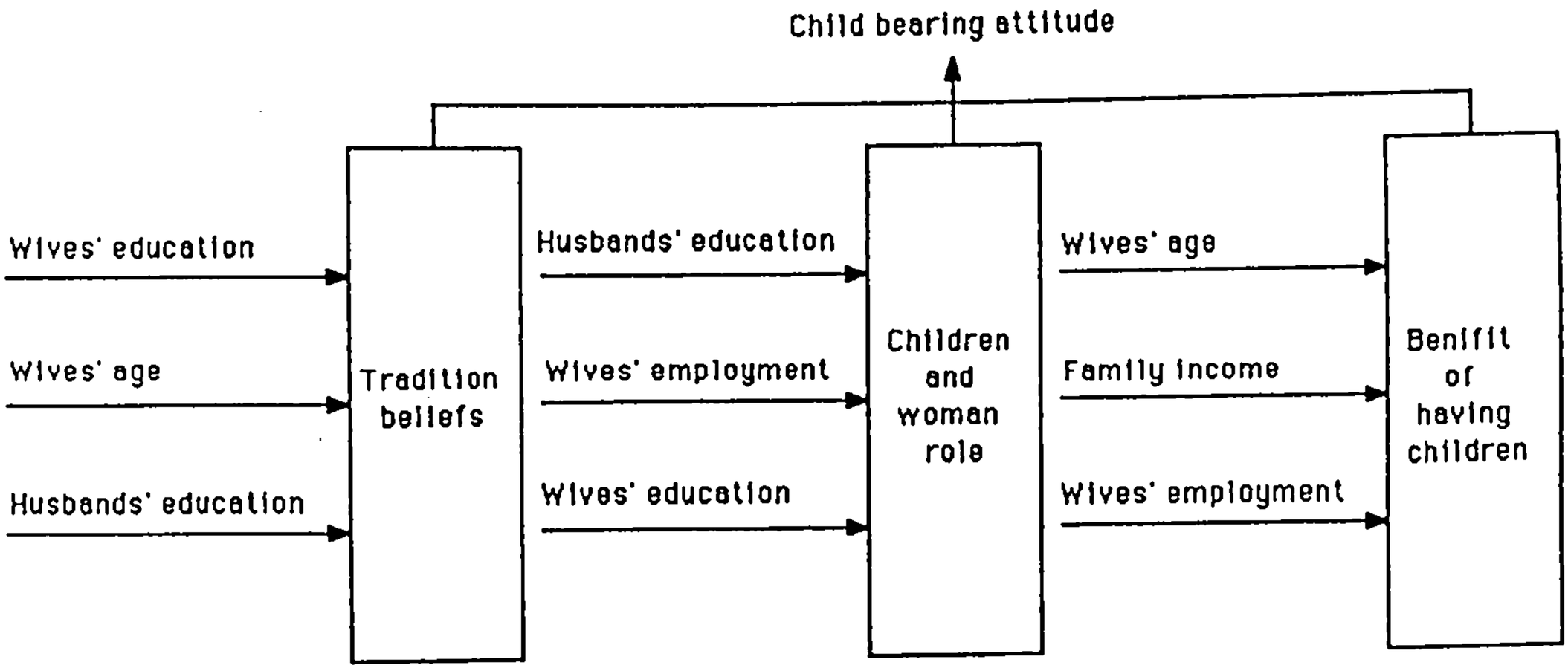
The overall findings are not surprising. It is interesting that the only representative of Bongaart's (1978) proximate determinants of fertility included in the analysis (age at marriage) had no statistically significant influence. In terms of Compton and Coward's (1989) model represented in Figure 1.2 the author's analysis confirms the greater importance of contextual variables such as education and income in affecting attitudes to fertility, which ultimately determine fertility through proximate determinants such as the use of contraceptives.

Clearly a wife's educational level will affect her likelihood of adapting to new ideas and to being influenced by other cultures, and thus of her being less concerned about the norms set by traditional society. Also, better education makes a woman more confident, and enhances her work opportunities and feeling of independence. Therefore, unlike poorly educated women, well educated women are less likely to believe that children constitute a major source of security.

A wife's age is an important factor affecting attitudes towards traditional beliefs. As was to be expected, younger wives are less influenced by traditional cultural values. Moreover, younger women expected to receive less benefits from their children compared with

older women. It can be expected that the perceived benefit of having children will continue to decrease with time due to factors such as increased female activity rates, the role of the political situation and the increase in costs of having and rearing children.

Figure 6.1: Variables affecting child bearing attitude (having the most contribution on the function).




Wives' employment is considered as a sign of women's emancipation from traditional culture which confined women to the home. Thus, it is not surprising to find a strong statistical relation between this variable and women's perceptions of their status. Also, employment is an important factor affecting women's attitudes towards having children. Employment strengthens womens status by making them more receptive to privilages from work than from children (Kupinsky, 1971). On the other hand the effect of

Table 6.7

Standardized canonical discriminant function co-efficients.

| VARIABLES | Traditional beliefs function | Children and womens role function | Benefits of having children |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wives' educational level | 0.4759* | 0.2248* | 0.2602 |
| Wives' age | 0.3273* | 0.0322 | 0.8531* |
| Wives' age at marriage | 0.0255 | 0.1438 | 0.2330 |
| Wives' employment status | 0.1321 | 0.4467* | 0.4220* |
| Husband's educational level | 0.2989* | 0.5953* | 0.1079 |
| Family income | 0.1848 | 0.0293 | 0.4759* |
| Place of residence | 0.1994 | 0.1144 | 0.1804 |

*Three variables contributing most to the discriminating power of the function. The higher the score the greater the contribution of the variable.

work on wives attitudes is immense. Children are considered to be the main competitors to women's employment. If wives believe that waged work gives them a better position in their society, then working wives may feel that they do not need more children or large families to secure their status (Sweet, 1979).

Husband's educational level appears to influence womens attitudes mainly towards traditional beliefs and towards the benefits rendered from having children. The effect of husbands on the attitudes of wives may become obvious through the following channels:-

1) Directly. More educated men tend to marry more educated women.

2) Indirectly. Through their lives and communication, less educated women may be influenced by their husbands ideas and ways of thinking. Hence it is believed that a husband's educational attainment is more important than his wife's. Moreover the aspirations of highly educated husbands towards future life styles, type of work and the family's social and economic status, makes them and their wives less concerned about traditional culture and its influence on having many children. It is also believed that wives will be given a stronger role by such men and may gain more freedom if they are married to highly educated men.

Family income only seemed to have a significant effect on wives' attitudes towards the net benefit of having children. Poorer families expected more financial benefits from their children than richer ones. This may be as a result of their pressing financial needs. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that children in these families contributed more support to their families at a younger age. It is also important to note that children of rich familes are more costly as compared with children of poorer ones.

Finally, it should be noted that Table 6.7 attributes very little explanatory power to locational factors: place of residence did not register as of major importance in any

of the three discriminant analyses undertaken here.

## 6.8 Summary

In this chapter it was found that cultural norms do constitute an important factor in shaping couples' decisions and attitudes towards their reproductive behaviour. Changes in traditional culture which have taken place as a result of development have had a partial effect on wive's attitudes and perceptions towards childbearing behaviour. Therefore, the diferences in responses to socio-economic development may increase the variation in fertility attitudes within the society. West Bank culture as well as the majority of Islamic societies, is rooted in Islamic teaching which emphasises the importance of large familes and in most cases has resisted external views about childbearing.

Changing demand for children is considered to be the most important factor in explaining fertility change. The costs and benefits of having children are less important variables than other factors in determining a couples decision in developing countries about family size. In this context attitudes to the traditional norms are often still the dominant influence. The findings of this study reveal that changes in couples attitudes are occurring in the West Bank and that this may cause some changes in the childbearing behaviour of the younger generation.

The findings of this study also show that parents are more willing to give their children greater freedom in

decision making. Also, the proportion of parents who would like their children to have less children than they had is greater than those who want their children to have more than what they had. Discriminant analysis is a statistical technique which was employed to study differences between groups in the survey population with respect to their attitudes towards cultural norms about childbearing. The findings indicated that women's attitudes are influenced mostly by factors such as a wife's age, educational level, employment status and husbands education level and family income.

# CHAPTER 7

## GENDER PREFERENCE

### 7.1 Introduction

The subject of parental attitudes and aspirations concerning the gender of children has attracted considerable analytical attention by demographers in the past few decades. This attention has been aroused mainly by the suggestion that strong gender preference may be one factor sustaining high levels of childbearing. This is so because couples may continue childbearing beyond their overall desired family size in order to achieve some favoured number of boys and girls. Therefore, it is important to investigate parents preference for male children in relation to other underlying determinants of fertility in the West Bank and in other developing countries. Coombs and Sun (1978) argue that such preference will become more salient in cases where contraceptives are used and where parents may prefer small families. Ironically as fertility declines through increasingly effective control of fertility it may be that gender preferences become even more important in explaining differentials between desired and final family size in certain cultural contexts.

Not only demographers, but also economists have taken an interest in researching male child preference as a determinant of fertility (Repetto, 1972; Williamson, 1974; Prachuabmoh et al., 1974; Stinner and Mader, 1975; Ben

Porath and Welch, 1976). This is so since male preference has also been used as a rough estimate of the extent of inequality prevailing in developing society.

This chapter uses both descriptive and analytical methods. The main aim is to identify the type of gender preference, and to examine the relationship between parents' gender preference, their attitudes towards family size and the observed trends in reproductive behaviour. More specifically this chapter will focus on the following issues related to parents' gender preference: the relative importance of gender preference, motives behind male child preference, gender preference of first and second children, attitudes towards male child preference and, difference between the views of husbands and wives with regard to gender preference.

## 7.2 Cultural changes and male preference

In West Bank culture, it is generally accepted that the most important role for the woman after marriage is to be a mother (Ata, 1986) (i.e. to conceive children) irrespective of whether she is in full time employment or not. Her status and position increases in her family and also in her father in law's family once she has become a mother and earns greater respect especially if she has given birth to male offspring, who will eventually inherit the family name and property. Therefore, ensuring the continuation of future generations is perceived to be of very great importance.

The preference for male children is actually engrained from cultural values which emphasize the importance of sons with regard to their dominant roles in society and in the economy. Gender preference is believed to long pre-date the Islamic influence in Arab culture. So prevalent are these views that most members of society may take them almost for granted. As a result gender preference has become a very significant factor in shaping fertility behaviour.

Generally in Arab society the birth of a daughter is not a joyous event, nor does it call for celebration (Haddad, 1980). The girl is regarded as a burden to her family as expressed in the common saying "a girl's vulnerability makes her need constant protection". Thus, her behaviour should be supervised by family members as evidence of the need to maintain the image of a girl's upright moral character. Barakat and Daw (1968) have found that there has also been fear amongst Palestinian families of having their women assaulted by Israeli forces, and this was the primary reason given by 30% of those who left the West Bank after the military occupation of 1967.

In spite of Islamic teaching favouring the equality of male and female in society, traditional values remain dominant, giving the impression that Islamic countries are inherently biased in favour of men. In some areas of the West Bank, especially among conservative segments of the population or among families with more than one daughter and without a male child, the birth of a female is still

perceived as an occasion of mourning rather than celebration (Hadad, 1980). To quote another Arab proverb illustrating cultural bias in favour of male children: "Men beget men".

The patriarchal family system, with a strict division of labour by gender therefore strongly reinforces traditional views of male and female roles. This gender split also extends the role taking care of the old suggesting that age as well as sex defines positions within the family (Lustick, 1980). Recently, this system has been challenged by ideas from other Western societies, and the introduction of new social and economic conditions. For example it has become established that girls should go to school and receive an education, even if the reason is not to improve the quality of the labour force but only because of a realisation that educated men prefer to marry educated women. Individualism also appears to be gaining ground and challenging the traditional family system. This in turn appears to be affecting attitudes to marriage. Many families still refuse to let their daughters marry a man who wants to live with his family after marriage. Social and economic changes have also affected the traditional family system by reducing the dependency ratio by comparison with those of the extended family (Zureik, 1980). Cultural changes and related changes in the family system have affected the couples independence in making childbearing decisions, and hence have changed the roles of

men and women within this decision making process.

On the contrary, there are many factors which have seemed to sustain traditional perspectives in the West Bank and have strengthened social and economic family ties. Some of these factors include:

1. The political situation in the West Bank, where the people have been living under Israel military occupation since 1967. This situation has made it necessary for the people to show greater familial solidarity, in order to counter the real and perceived threats of the Israeli occupying forces and in order to resist integration with Israeli community and the loss of Palestinian identity. One indicator of the revival of the traditional family system has been the spread of the Deewan, that is the place where all members of the extended family meet on various occasions to discuss matters of concern (Lustick, 1980).
2. The deteriorating economic situation in the West Bank, has encouraged emigration and resulted in dependence by some West Bank families on the remittances sent home by their relatives. This economic situation has created a new social relationship which has consolidated the extended family role (Abed, 1988). This situation makes the family more eager to have males.
3. Most religious families still think that the woman's role should be restricted to domestic work and familial tasks (Williamson, 1976). This role has intensified due to the emergence of Islamic movement in the West

Bank (Islamic revival).

4. Another result of male youth emigration has been an increasing ratio of unmarried to married females, since a great number of males marry from outside the West Bank (Zanoun, 1985). This type of marriage makes the women involved more dependent on their family. The rising spinster ratio has of course been of very great concern to parents worried about their daughter's future. This in turn has tended to fuel further gender bias in favour of male children.
5. The inheritance system, especially in rural areas, where the male only can inherit the fathers wealth and land, despite the fact that Islam gives females the right of inheritance as well.

7.3 Gender preference and family size.

The socio economic context of the West Bank dictates that most older people have to either live with their children (usually their sons), or depend on them financially. This along with other social and psychological factors might lead to parental prejudice in favour of male children rather than female.

A relationship also exists between the number of children within the family and gender preference. This relationship can be explained as follows:

1. In cultures with small family size norms and without strong gender preferences, the pressure to have small numbers of children may dominate over all other factors

such as gender preference.

2. If desired family size is large, gender preference may not affect behaviour until later in the family cycle.
3. If the desired family size is very large, then gender preference may become less important because the probability of satisfying the preference to have a child of a particular sex is much greater when there are more children.
4. If desired family size is moderate as in some developing countries of the Islamic world, and there is a strong preference for males, then the effect on population growth may become considerable. This is because couples with a strong male preference may go beyond their desired family size in the event where they do not achieve the gender mix in their family which they want by the time their preferred number of children is reached.

Sheps (1963) has shown mathematically that the probability of having a male child is almost the same for all ethnic groups. Gender preference may not affect the sex ratio of the population, but the expected family size will increase by the increasing preference for one sex over the other because gender control (having a boy or girl) is beyond parents' control. Therefore unsatisfied parents normally increase their number of children in order to fulfil their desire.

Dawes (1970) found that in completed families more couples had stopped having children after the birth of a

son than after the birth of a daughter. Thus, the sex ratio for the last live birth in completed families was more imbalanced than for all births. Jelliffe and Jelliffe (1978) suggest that a family without a son in a society with strong male child preference shortens the period of lactation in order to accelerate the birth of the next child. Conversely, birth intervals and use of contraceptives should be greater following male births.

## 7.4 Variables affecting male child prefernce

Turning to the author's survey of West Bank households, Table 7.1 shows that the couples interviewed had a strong male preference. The proportion of husbands who expressed a preference for a son over a daughter was about 91%, while the proportion for wives was 82%. This supports evidence of other researchers, indicating that husbands are more likely to express male child preference than their wives (Williamson, 1976; Coombs and Fernandez, 1978). This differential between husbands and wives reflects differences in perspective. It is generally believed that sons provide greater companionship for their father than do daughters. The reasons for mothers preferring sons over daughters include the desire for greater security and influence.

Differences between the urban and rural environments and between social groups are evident in table 7.1. It appears that husbands in the lower and middle classes in the city have a more favourable attitude towards male

children, while the husbands and wives in the city's upper classes favour male children less.

Table 7.1

Male child preference by place of residence, education, age and work status.

| Variables | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|
| | Husbands | Wives |
| Total population | 91.9 | 82.1 |
| AREA | | |
| Villages | 92.3 | 84.0 |
| Towns | 91.0 | 85.3 |
| City, lower class | 100.0 | 90.0 |
| City, middle class | 97.0 | 80.0 |
| City, upper class | 82.0 | 58.0 |
| Refugee camps | 89.9 | 84.8 |
| EDUCATION LEVEL | | |
| Illiterate | 94.9 | 90.8 |
| Low level of education | 94.1 | 84.0 |
| Intermediate level of education | 87.7 | 74.8 |
| High level of education | 86.8 | 57.3 |
| AGE | | |
| Old (over 50 years) | 95.3 | 88.4 |
| Middle (30-50 years) | 90.8 | 84.9 |
| Young (less than 30 years) | 87.7 | 75.0 |
| WORK STATUS | | |
| Not working | 91.4 | 83.2 |
| Working | 95.0 | 63.2 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

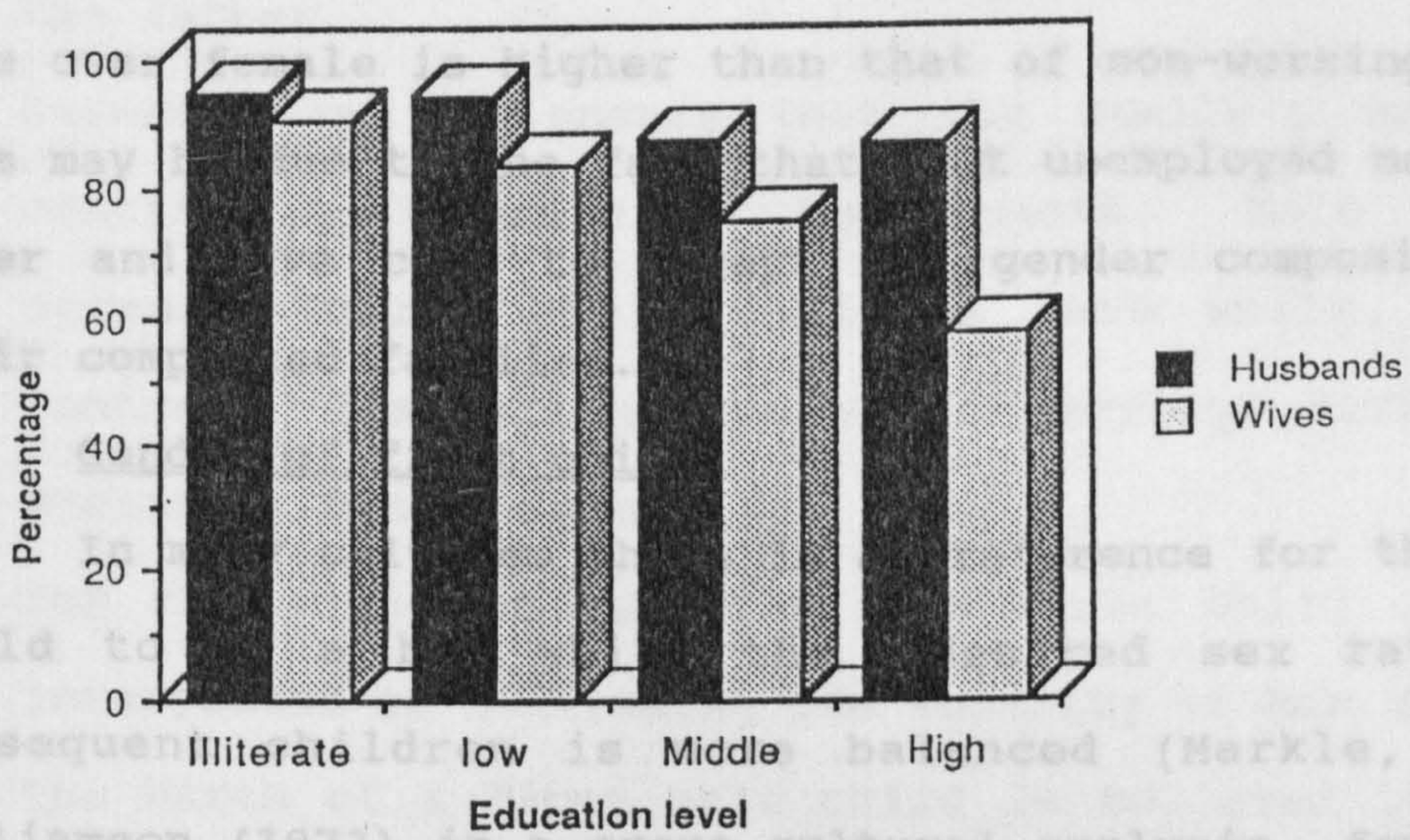
This could be attributed to several factors:

1. Economic factors: parents in the lower classes may be more inclined to want to have male children so that they can be supported in their old age.
2. Family size: middle class people are more educated. Therefore they have a tendency to have small families. Consequently gender preference will become acute for these groups.
3. Fatalism: it is believed that parents in rural areas are fatalistic. Therefore they have a tendency to accept what God has given them.
4. Labour force participation: in rural areas girls under the age of 15 play a major role in helping their parents with the agricultural work.

It is worth considering some of these factors now in more detail. One would expect that formal education, which usually implies that people are exposed to more modern views would be inversely related to family size and male preference. It is noted from table 7.1 that the proportion of couples who prefer male over female children decreases as education levels rise (see also Figure 7.1), with the differences being statistically significant at the 99% level of confidence. The chi-square value for husbands is 14.98 with 3 degrees of freedom and the Cramer's V equals 0.13, while the chi-square value for the wives is much higher than husbands at 66.36 with 3 degrees of freedom and a Cramer's V value 0.26. From these results, it is easy to conclude that education has more influence on wives'

attitudes than on their husbands.

Figure 7.1: Male preference by educational level.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 7.1.

It might be expected that older parents would be more traditional and, therefore, have stronger preferences than younger parents, who might be open to more modern attitudes. Table 7.1 shows that 95.3% of the husbands in the older age groups preferred male children than female. The proportion decreases to 90.8% among the middle aged and 87.7% among the young. In the same manner the proportion of older women who preferred male children to female decreased from 88.4% among the old to 75% for those of younger ages. Parents' age and male child preference are negatively associated and the relationship is statistically significant, as shown by the chi-square test.

The influence of work appears to be more obvious in

wives' responses, since the proportion of women who prefer male over female children drops from 83.2% to 63.2% as a result of their work obligations. On the contrary, the proportion of husbands who are actively employed who prefer male over female is higher than that of non-working males. This may be due to the fact that most unemployed males are older and have come to accept the gender composition of their completed families.

7.5 Gender of first child

In many cultures there is a preference for the first child to be a boy while the desired sex ratio for subsequent children is more balanced (Markle, 1974). Williamson (1973) in a cross cultural analysis found that as well as there being a preference for male babies in virtually all cultures around the world, there was also a clear desire for the first child to be male. As for child bearing in the West Bank, male preference is strong for all children but is even stronger for the first child. The vast majority of those who had had a daughter wanted a son for their first child.

There are at least four main reasons for this pattern existing in the West Bank:

1. The first male child is of a particular significance to parents because parents normally carry the name of their eldest son. For example, parents of a child named "Muhammad" will be called "the father of Muhammed" and "the mother of Muhammed". As a result of this parents have a strong desire for males, especially

the first born, hence parents in the West Bank, like any other Arab country, dislike being called by the name of their daughters. This is especially true for the father.

2. Parents want to ensure that the family's name will continue to exist after their death. Male children normally carry their family's name while, on the contrary, female children after marriage carry their husband's family name.
3. For the wife the birth of the first child is often interpreted as increasing the security of her marriage. The birth of a first male child is believed to result in women receiving greater respect in her family, and that of her husband, and in society as a whole.

Westoff et al. (1963) found that when the first child is a boy the interval before the second child is conceived is on average three months, larger than if the first child is a girl. Also, the tendency to practice the use of contraceptives after the birth of a first male child is greater than if the first born child is female.

In West Bank society, as well as in many Arab countries, the disappointment of couples will intensify, if the first child is a daughter and this is followed by another female baby. Gender preference also affects child care. For example, a male child may be given greater attention and care in terms of longer breastfeeding, better nutrition and frequent medical examinations. Less

attention will be given by the mother if the first child is female.

The present study reveals that West Bank couples have a particular desire for the first child born to be male. For example, the percentage of husbands and wives who would prefer any child to be male over female is 91.9% and 82.1% respectively, while the percentage of those who would prefer the first child to be male is 94.7% and 83.2% respectively (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2

Couples preference for the first child to be male by place of residence.

| | Husbands | Wives |
|---|---|---|
| Total population | 94.7 | 83.2 |
| AREA | | |
| Villages | 95.3 | 81.0 |
| Towns | 92.7 | 80.0 |
| City, lower class | 100.0 | 92.0 |
| City, middle class | 98.0 | 78.0 |
| City, upper class | 95.0 | 86.0 |
| Refugee camps | 89.9 | 90.9 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Once again there appears to be a relationship with place of residence. It is interesting to find that rural areas are less prejudiced than some urban groups. This can be attributed to the following reasons.

(a) Couples in an urban area usually desire a smaller family size than those in a rural area. However, if the first born child is male then the probability of attaining the family size desired will be greater.

(b) Couples in rural areas have strong beliefs in fate and divine decree and they will be more likely to be satisfied with their destiny if the first child happens to be female.

7.6 Gender preference of the next child

One would expect that gender preference would affect a couple's attitude towards the prospect of having further children, especially when the existing gender composition of their family is not in line with their preferences. It can be assumed that family size preferences are associated with preferences about family composition (number of male and female children desired). The influences of gender preferences on the family formation process would seem to be threefold, affecting:

1. future use of contraception.
2. the birth interval and likelihood of stopping having children.
3. desired family size, resulting in re-evaluations of the ideal size.

Prachuabmoh et al. (1974) and Pohlman (1969) have found that couples may continue childbearing beyond their desired family size in order to achieve a favourable number or a different distribution of sons and daughters. Also Repetto (1972) found a strong correlation in Morocco

between the strength of son preference and the total number of live births.

Table 7.3 shows for both the husband and wife the gender preference for the next child in the West Bank sample, in relation to the existing number of sons and daughters. It shows that husbands had a greater desire for the next child to be male almost regardless of their current family composition. Virtually all couples who had more daughters than sons wanted the next birth to be a male. Where current family composition had a male dominance the differences between husbands and wives was much greater.

Table 7.3

Male preference for the next child for those couples who wanted an additional child, in relation to their current family composition.

| Current family composition | Husbands | Wives |
|---|---|---|
| More sons than daughters | 76.4 | 48.9 |
| Same no. of sons as daughters | 93.3 | 84.9 |
| Fewer sons than daughters | 100 | 98.8 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Differences in outlook relative to current family composition proved, both for husbands and wives to be statistically significant at the 0.001 level (chi-square value = 50.7 with 2 degrees of freedom). The differences were much greater for women than for men with the chi-square calculated value = 127.9 with 2 degrees of freedom

and with significance level of 0.0001, and Cramer's V = 0.5.

## 7.7 Classification of gender preference

Couples preferences take many forms. Among the more visible are (a) the desire for at least one child of each sex, (b) a desire for a minimum number of children of a particular sex (e.g. at least two sons) or (c) for an approximately equal numbers of male and female children. These and other possible desiderata may co-exist in a complex manner. For example, taking two women who both desire three sons, a researcher may find that one woman wants in total only three children, while another wants five children. It is therefore impossible to assume that their preferences are the same since the likelihood of obtaining their objectives in these two situations are unequal.

A couples gender preferences may change over time, depending not only on the gender composition of their family but on the order of the births. For example, an individual may want the first and second children to be male and the third to be female. In addition couples may hold preferences with regard to the spacing of births, multiple births and the physical characteristics of their children.

Table 7.4 presents the preferred distribution of sons and daughters recorded for women and men interviewed in the survey. It can be noted from the table that the percentage of husbands who preferred all their children to be male was

1.9% by comparison with only 0.1% who desired all their children to be female. Only 9.7% of husbands wanted an equal number of male and female children. Most husbands (36%) wanted a majority of their children to be male (more than 2 boys) but to have only two daughters.

Table 7.4

Husbands' preferred distribution of sons and daughters (absolute numbers).

| No. of sons | No. of daughters 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8+ | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 |
| 1 | 2 | 6 | | 1 | | | | | | 9 |
| 2 | 4 | 48 | 37 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | | 95 |
| 3 | 3 | 44 | 112 | 19 | | 1 | | | | 179 |
| 4 | | 21 | 88 | 31 | 7 | | | | | 147 |
| 5 | | 10 | 55 | 41 | 12 | 19 | | | | 137 |
| 6 | 1 | 10 | 39 | 42 | 32 | 2 | 5 | | | 131 |
| 7 | 2 | 8 | 12 | 65 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 1 | | 110 |
| 8+ | 7 | 16 | 53 | 29 | 33 | 38 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 190 |
| Total | 19 | 163 | 397 | 231 | 98 | 70 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 999 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 7.5 shows that the proportion of wives who wanted an equal number of male and female children was only about 21% of the total while the proportion of women who wanted all their children to be male was about 2.5%. None of the wives wanted all their children to be female. Similar to their husbands, most women (34%) wanted to have

two daughters and more than two sons.

Table 7.5

Wives' preferred distribution of sons and daughters (absolute numbers).

| No. of sons | No. of daughters 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8+ | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | 8 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 10 |
| 2 | | 38 | 84 | 4 | 1 | | | | | 127 |
| 3 | 1 | 46 | 117 | 66 | 1 | | | | | 231 |
| 4 | 2 | 27 | 70 | 55 | 22 | | | | | 176 |
| 5 | 2 | 25 | 65 | 46 | 9 | 24 | | | | 171 |
| 6 | 2 | 5 | 38 | 18 | 28 | 1 | 7 | | | 99 |
| 7 | 4 | 7 | 14 | 45 | 3 | 5 | | 2 | | 80 |
| 8+ | 14 | 15 | 38 | 14 | 13 | 9 | 2 | | | 105 |
| Total | 25 | 171 | 427 | 249 | 77 | 39 | 9 | 2 | | 999 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Comparing the data in tables 7.4 and 7.5, one can conclude that husbands are more extreme in their preference for sons. Despite this husbands and wives have a strong preference for male children.

Table 7.6 is derived from tables 7.4 and 7.5 and summarises the information in another way.

Table 7.6

Overall gender preferences of husbands and wives (%).

| Types | Husbands | Wives |
|---|---|---|
| All male births | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| All female births | 0.9 | 0.0 |
| Equal number of male and female children | 9.7 | 21.3 |
| More male than female children | 89.4 | 77.9 |
| 1 daughter and more than 1 son | 15.7 | 16.3 |
| 2 daughters and more than 2 sons | 35.9 | 34.2 |
| 3 daughters and more than 3 sons | 20.8 | 17.8 |
| 4 daughters and more than 4 sons | 8.9 | 5.3 |
| 5 daughters and more than 5 sons | 4.9 | 1.5 |
| 6 daughters and more than 6 sons | 1.1 | 0.2 |
| 7 daughters and more than 7 sons | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| More female than male children | 0.9 | 0.8 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

## 7.8 Gender preference scale

There is no recognised or standard scale for the measurement of sex preferences. Some studies have used the sex ratio as a method of measuring the differences in preferences. Coombs (1974) developed a scale to measure sex preference and desired family size (I.S. and I.N. scales). However, it is difficult to implement this scale in this study because the sample size is rather large to study all the probabilities of birth and gender order. Instead the researcher used the following categorical divisions:

1. Female preference: a term for the small number of people who preferred daughters to sons. In the survey this scale would range from -3 to -1.

2. No preference; a term describing the situation where the number of male children preferred equals the number of female.
3. Mild male child bias; for situations where the number of males is more than the number of females by only one boy.
4. Moderate male child bias. Males exceed females by 2.
5. Strong male child bias. Males exceed females by 3 or 4.
6. Very strong male child bias. Males exceed females by five or more.

The categorical scale proposed above makes it possible to draw comparisons between various countries, and indeed between areas in the same country and between groups with different characteristics. The main criticisms of this scale can be summarised as follows:

1. This scale does not take into consideration overall desired family size.
2. It is difficult to distinguish between the couples with no preference but who want children and those who do not want any children at all.
3. Another shortcoming of this scale, and others like it is the inability of measuring unspecified answers, such as "don't know", "up to God", etc.

It can be noted from table 7.7 that more than 20% of couples in the West Bank have strong or very strong preferences for males over females. With regard to the differences between husbands and wives, it is clear from

the table that the proportion of wives who prefer an equal number of sons and daughters is more than double that of their counterparts. This reinforces the view that husbands have an extreme bias in favour of male children.

Table 7.7

Classification of gender preference on the researcher's categorical scale (percentages).

| | Female Prefer-ence | No Prefer-ence | Mild | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Husbands | 1.0 | 9.6 | 20.9 | 22.4 | 26.6 | 19.4 |
| Wives | 0.8 | 21.3 | 22.0 | 19.6 | 23.0 | 13.4 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Given the importance of cultural factors in determining levels of bias in sex preferences, it is useful to deal here briefly with a range of variables (such as place of residence, education and age for both husbands and wives) which could contribute to explaining the level of bias. This is done in relation to the categorical scale introduced in Table 7.7.

Table 7.8 shows that there is a big difference between sub areas. A high percentage of husbands (26%) in small villages had a very strong male preference compared with lower percentages in the urban middle classes (12%). Husbands preference for an equal number of sons and daughters was most common in the urban upper classes (18%), while none of the husbands in the city's lower class

admitted to this preference pattern. The geographical variation of male birth preferences may be due to several reasons, such as the fluctuation of family income, education levels, level of aspirations, perceived value of children, the cost and benefit of each sex, and the level of social and economic development in each particular area.

Table 7.8

Percentage distribution of husbands' preferences regarding the gender of their children by place of residence, education and age.

| Scale | More Female | No Preference | Mild | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Small villages | 1.7 | 7.7 | 20.3 | 20.7 | 24.0 | 25.7 |
| Towns | 0.7 | 14.0 | 18.3 | 21.7 | 28.7 | 16.7 |
| City: | | | | | | |
| Lower class | - | - | 18.0 | 33.0 | 32.0 | 17.0 |
| Middle class | 1.0 | 3.0 | 28.0 | 21.0 | 35.0 | 12.0 |
| Upper class | 2.0 | 18.0 | 24.0 | 19.0 | 22.0 | 23.2 |
| Refugee camps | - | 10.1 | 23.2 | 24.2 | 19.2 | 23.2 |
| Education: | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | - | 0.7 | 9.6 | 15.3 | 35.5 | 38.9 |
| Low | 1.2 | 6.3 | 16.4 | 23.8 | 31.9 | 20.4 |
| Middle | 1.8 | 12.9 | 31.4 | 20.2 | 22 | 11.7 |
| High | 0.6 | 18.4 | 34.5 | 27.0 | 13.2 | 6.3 |
| Age: | | | | | | |
| Old generation | - | 6.5 | 10.5 | 20.3 | 30.8 | 32.0 |
| Middle gentn. | 1.6 | 10.3 | 23.0 | 24.3 | 26.9 | 14.0 |
| Young gentn. | 1.8 | 14.1 | 36.4 | 23.2 | 18.6 | 5.9 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 7.8 shows that education has a strong influence on husband's gender preference. For example, the proportion of husbands with no male preference increased from 0.7% among illiterate husbands to 18.4% among husbands with higher education. This means that education reduces the desire for a strong and very strong male preference. For instance, the proportion of husbands who had a very strong male preference decreased from 39% for illiterate husbands to 6% for husbands with higher education.

Table 7.9

Percentage distribution of wives' preferences regarding the gender of their children by place of residence, education and age.

| Scale | More Female | No Prefer-ence | Mild | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Small villages | 0.3 | 17.3 | 19.3 | 22 | 26.3 | 14.7 |
| Towns | 0.3 | 18.0 | 21.3 | 24.3 | 20.0 | 16.0 |
| City: | | | | | | |
| Lower class | 1.0 | 20.0 | 26.0 | 21.0 | 19.0 | 13.0 |
| Middle class | 2.0 | 31.0 | 28.0 | 14.0 | 19.0 | 6.0 |
| Upper class | 3.0 | 38.0 | 22.0 | 12.0 | 21.0 | 4.0 |
| Refugee camps | 0.8 | 18.2 | 22.2 | 10.1 | 32.3 | 17.2 |
| Education: | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 0.6 | 12.3 | 10.7 | 18.1 | 20.8 | 25.5 |
| Low | 0.4 | 19.3 | 22.9 | 23.9 | 23.4 | 10.0 |
| Middle | 0.9 | 29.1 | 38.4 | 13.2 | 12.6 | 4.0 |
| High | - | 46.6 | 30.1 | 16.5 | 5.8 | 1.0 |
| Age: | | | | | | |
| Old generation | - | 13.4 | 10.8 | 19.0 | 30.6 | 26.3 |
| Middle gentn. | 0.7 | 17.6 | 21.8 | 20.8 | 24.6 | 14.4 |
| Young gentn. | 1.4 | 30.5 | 29.4 | 18.7 | 16.5 | 3.6 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Husband's age appears to have had a similar effect as education on preference patterns. Younger husbands were more likely to be classed as having no preference, or being mild or moderate in their child preference than middle aged and older husbands. The proportion of husbands who held strong and very strong male child preferences decreased from 63% for older men to 41% for middle aged husbands to only 24% for younger husbands. These variations can be explained largely by differences between generations in their educational achievement and outlook.

Table 7.9 shows a similar distribution for wives. Wives in rural areas and in the refugee camps had the greatest desire to have a high proportion of male children. As with the male pattern, there are differences between the varying classes in the urban areas relating to the social and economic contexts of these groups. For example, the women in the lower classes may have had quite logical reasons for having a strong male preference where wealth flows from children to parents are significant. Male children provide the greater potential for economic support for their families, while daughters may be perceived as a net burden.

As with table 7.8 for husbands, so also for wives the most obvious variable determining differences in responses was their educational level. The proportion of wives who held a very strong male preference decreased from 25.5% among illiterate women to 1% among highly educated women.

Comparison of tables 7.8 and 7.9 might be taken to support the view that wives are more open to new ideas from other cultures (and in particular Western culture) than their husbands. One reason for this may be that traditional Arab culture has been more constraining with regard to women's roles and consequently may have induced a greater desire for change amongst Arab women.

## 7.9 Testing factors affecting gender preference

In order to examine some of the hypotheses listed above statistical methods were used to determine which variables had the greatest influence on gender preference. The variables examined included place of residence, education, age, age at marriage, duration of marriage, work status, family income, house size, actual family size and actual family composition. Once again discriminant analysis was used to determine which of these variables had the greatest effect on the dependent variable.

Discriminant analysis was able to account for 74% of the variance in husbands attitudes and 45% of wives. In other words the percentage of cases adequately classified for gender preference categories by this technique was 74% for husbands and 45% for wives.

Discriminant analysis maximises the between group differences on discriminant scores and minimises the within group differences. However, many measures are used to evaluate the importance of the functions. Table 7.10 presents these measures and their values.

Table 7.10

Measures of evaluating the importance of functions.

| | EIGEN VALUE | CANONICAL CORRELATION | WILK'S LAMBDA | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HUSBANDS | | | | |
| Function 1 | 0.25 | 0.45 | 0.78 | 0.000 |
| WIVES | | | | |
| Function 1 | 0.25 | 0.44 | 0.76 | 0.000 |

The eigen values for husbands and wives were similar (25%). An eigen value of 0% would mean that the discriminant analysis had no power. The analysis undertaken here can be judged in terms of the eigen value to be of some significance, although failing to explain all the variation in the data set (Hair et al., 1984).

As noted in the last chapter, canonical correlation is a good measure of how well the function discriminates between groups. Once again it can be noted from the table that canonical correlations for the husbands and wives are very similar (0.45 and 0.44 respectively) and that the statistical model is operating moderately efficiently.

Wilk's lamda measures the discriminating power of the model. The Wilk's lambda for husbands was 0.78 and 0.76 for the wives, when all functions were included in the analysis. These values means that the differences between groups accounted for 22% of variance for husbands and 24% for wives.

Standardised discriminant function co-efficients are

used to evaluate the importance of variables since discriminant analysis produces discriminant function co-efficients for each predictive variable. The discriminant function co-efficients are calculated to maximise the differences between groups in discriminant function scores. The term "standardised" indicates that each variable score is standardised before it is multiplied by the co-efficient. In standardising a variable score, the mean for that variable is subtracted from the score and then the differences are divided by the standard deviation. Standardised variables have a mean score of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.0. Standardised variables are used in order to remove the effects of differing means and standard deviations.

Table 7.11 shows the three variables with the biggest effect on wives' attitudes towards gender preference. These are education (57%), family size (31%) and family composition (25%), while the results for husbands indicate them to be family size (62%), duration of marriage (51%) and education (30%).

It is clear that husbands' and wives' attitudes towards male preferences are influenced to some extent by similar variables which include actual family size and educational level.

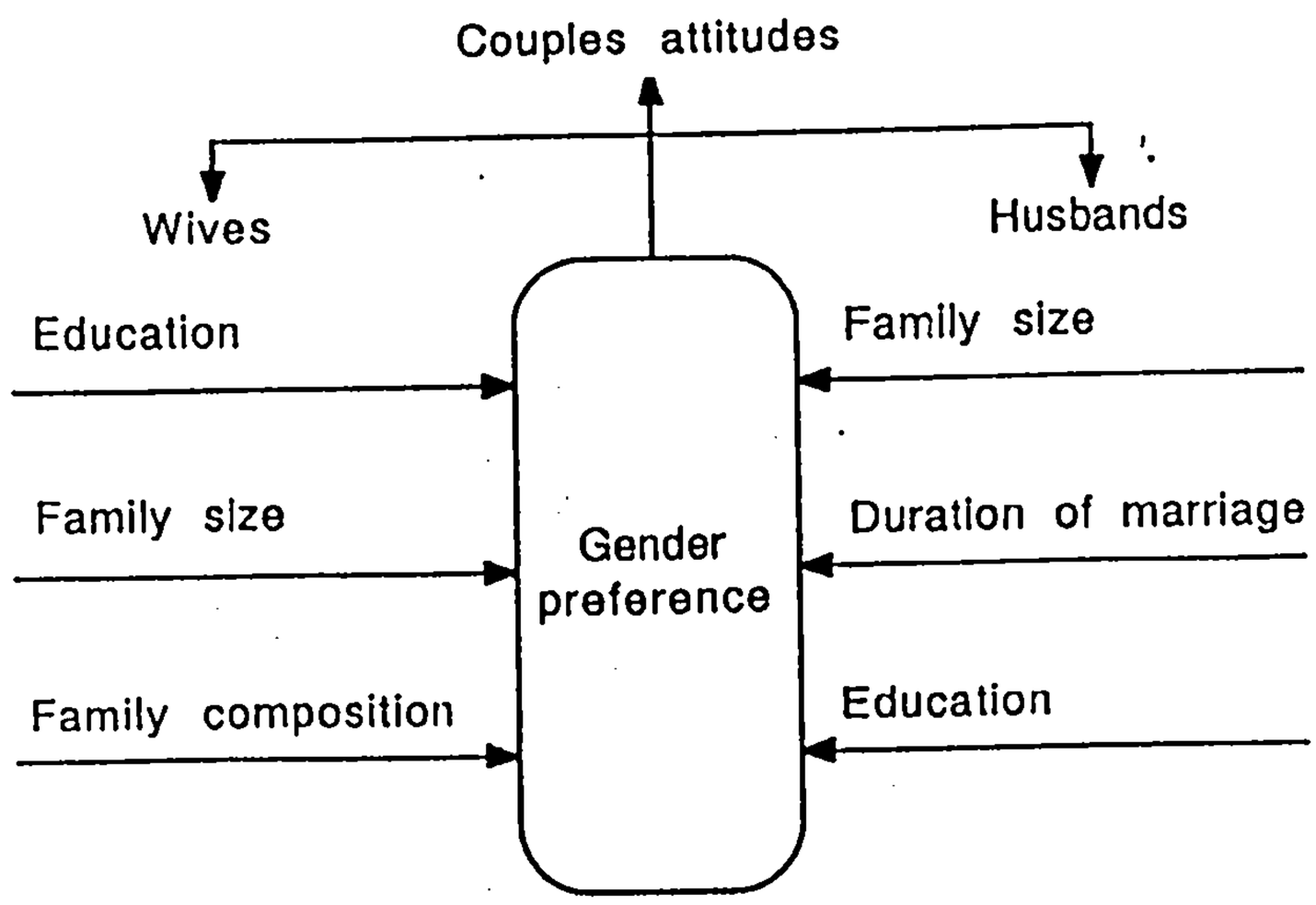
Table 7.11

Standardised discriminant co-efficient.

| VARIABLES | HUSBANDS Function 1 | WIVES Function 1 |
|---|---|---|
| Family income | 0.101 | 0.20 |
| Respondents age | 0.059 | 0.198 |
| Educational level | 0.301 | 0.566 |
| Age at marriage | 0.024 | 0.015 |
| Place of residence | 0.129 | 0.048 |
| Work status | 0.049 | 0.139 |
| House size | 0.077 | 0.023 |
| Duration of marriage | 0.512 | 0.017 |
| Actual family size | 0.619 | 0.311 |
| Actual family composition | 0.102 | 0.251 |

The signs of coefficients in discriminant analysis have no special meaning because the dependent variable is treated as a nominal variable.

Figure 7.2: Variables affecting gender preference (having the most contribution on the function).



## 7.10 Reasons for male child preference

Male child preference seems to be rooted in Arab culture because of economic, social, cultural and psychological factors. This part of the chapter aims to discuss qualitative and quantitative evidence which may explain why parents are more eager to have more male children.

In the West Bank society where there is strongly defined gender segregation in waged work, it is possible to assume that males may be considered more productive economically than females. Therefore, male children are considered to be a source of future financial support, security and an insurance against the risks associated with ageing. Consequently, parents desire to bear male children.

Son preference has long been recognised as typical of many traditional societies and to be deeply embedded in religious teaching and social practice (Williamson, 1973). Table 7.12 reports some of the important reasons given by those wives interviewed by the author for their child preferences. Respondents were allowed to select several different reasons from a range of possibilities on the questionnaire.

It is noted from the table that a very high proportion of wives (52.3%) attributed their male child preference to the various pressures resulting from their own experience as a woman. These pressures include:

First: A parents' responsibility towards their daughters

is perceived to extend beyond their marriage. Therefore, females constitute a continued source of worry and responsibility. In Arab societies for example when a women is faced with problems such as divorce or maltreatment by her husband, she eventually returns to her fathers house asking for support. This situation may be due to the cultural values which makes the womens position weak and always in need of familial support. This is more obvious in rural areas where the proportion of women who selected this as a reason was higher than in urban regions. Such a belief is supported by the Arabic proverb which says "Ham Al-Banat Ela Al-Mamat": that is, "the burden of having a girl remains even after her death".

Second: Social pressures - in the West Bank, as in most Arab and Muslim societes, the reputation of the whole family will be put at risk when any deviation from cultural norms and values occurs. Such deviation is likely to bring dishonour and disgrace (Fadiha or Ar) to the whole family.

Third: An unmarried girl is likely to constitute a continued source of pressure and threat to her family. This is because of the speculations behind the reasons for her not being married. In the West Bank people start to wonder about the reasons for a girl not getting married even at quite young ages.

Fourth: Costs/benefits. Girls are thought to be more costly than boys, especially because girls normally get

married at times when they are capable of helping their parents (working ages). After marriage, girls normally disassociate themselves from their parents in any financial sense.

The second most important reason given by respondents was that sons carry on the family name while daughters carry only their husband's family name. This is in line with May and Heer (1968) who found that the majority of people in rural India explained their preference for male children as a response to the need to insure the survival of the father's lineage after his death. In Arab society this reason was more important in the past, when mortality rates were higher. It is noticeable that a higher percentage of women in rural area's and in the refugee camps gave this as an explanation perhaps reflecting the higher levels of infant mortality. Regarding the urban social classes, a high proportion gave this answer in the upper class areas (25.9%). This may be due to the fact that:

a) these women desire to have small families compared with women in other social areas.

b) most of the cities upper class families are from respectable families with social and economic power in the West Bank, and with a strong family tradition to maintain.

The table also shows that 13.4% of the women prefer male children because of all the reasons mentioned. However, a high proportion in lower class urban areas

(42%), expressed the belief that male children are necessary in order to improve the family's social and economic status.

Economic reasons constituted 11.4% of wives responses. The highest proportions of wives indicating a son preference for economic reasons were found in the urban middle and upper classes. The economic value of sons as agricultural labourers is not as crucial as in some societies, because many Palestinian families have either lost their land during one of the conflicts with Israel or have switched voluntarily to working in the urban sector.

Table 7.12

Reasons given for male child preference by wives by place of residence.

| | Social | Econ-omic | Inher-itance | Female pressure | All reasons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total population | 16.3 | 11.4 | 6.6 | 52.3 | 13.4 |
| Small villages | 17.5 | 11.5 | 6.0 | 57.2 | 7.8 |
| Towns | 14.8 | 12.1 | 7.8 | 54.3 | 11.0 |
| City, lower class | 6.7 | 6.7 | 1.1 | 43.4 | 42.1 |
| City, middle class | 13.6 | 16.0 | 11.1 | 50.6 | 8.7 |
| City, upper class | 25.9 | 19.0 | 6.9 | 41.4 | 6.8 |
| Refugee camps | 23.8 | 4.8 | 6.0 | 50.0 | 15.4 |

Chi-square = 115.3 d.f. 20 Significance = 0.001

Source: Author's data, 1988.

The nature of economic support from sons to the family was identified as changing through time:

1. Some economic benefits occurred when they were still

children since, especially in the agricultural sector, they could help with household production activities.

2. Financial support was clearly greatest when the children entered the labour market.
3. In some respects, however, the most important benefits were perceived to be the financial and emotional support received by parents in their old age.
4. The provision of a place of residence for parents in their old age.

The value of an adult son is a matter of some controversy. In the author's survey about 52% of wives believed that children in past generations had provided more support to their parents than nowadays, while only about 6% of women thought that son's currently provided more economic support.

It is difficult to propose any kind of policy to reduce parental preference towards having male children over female, although clearly the survey has indicated the potential for indirect action in this direction via measures to favour increased educational attainment, economic development by introducing new work opportunities for women and social developments such as establishing a system of social security would also contribute to a reduction in this particular gender bias. On the contrary, and in the West Bank, there are many factors which encourage male preference, such as the influence of the extended family on couples decisions with regard to childbearing, and the political situation where to have

daughters under occupation constitutes a continuous worry for parents.

The contribution of sons to their parental household income seemed to be especially small amongst married sons. It can be noted from Table 7.13 that more than 80% of sons did not contribute to the parental family budget, while less than 10% of sons contributed more than half of the family's income. The differences between married and unmarried sons is very clear. Given the relatively low financial contribution made by sons, it is quite surprising that so many mothers declare this as a reason for son preference.

Table 7.13

The contribution of sons to parental family income.

| | Proportion of parential family income (%) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nothing | Less than 20% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | More than 80% |
| Unmarried son | 72.2 | 5.7 | 9 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 2.2 |
| Married son | 86.6 | 6.6 | 4.3 | 1.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Another argument which should be taken into consideration, is parental desire for their sons to receive higher education. About 85% of parents wanted their sons to have opportunities in higher education (University and post-graduate studies). Thus the cost of raising children is becoming higher as a result of increased educational

costs. It is therefore obviously the case that the financial benefits of having sons are becoming very small, if not negative, as a result of changing economic and social circumstances.

Only 6.6% of wives gave familial inheritance as their reason for holding a male-child preference. Without a son, family property would be transferred to the families of their daughters after marriage. This reason was of more concern to women in rural areas where land inheritance was an important issue.

In spite of the strong level of male-child preference, parents still wanted at least one daughter to help them with household work or to provide companionship for the mother. Since in the West Bank boys despise women's work, especially if there is a daughter in the family, it is not surprising to find that male-child preference is not to the exclusion of having daughters.

7.11 Male-child preference attitudes

Parental gender preferences cannot be seen as an isolated set of attitudes, but as attitudes which fit into a broader social setting. These attitudes often affect and modify parents' views on desired family size. Attitudes on these key factors evolve over time reflecting on the one hand the momentum in society of traditional cultural perspectives, and, on the other hand, the experiences of individual households affected both by the views of the last generation and by new ideas infiltrating as a result of social and economic change processes. The final part of

this chapter will focus on wives's responses to traditional attitudes to male-child preference. Analysis of the interaction of these two influences on decision making (societal and household) is critical in the search for explanations of fertility change in developing societies. In order to test the nature of the interaction in West Bank society a four point scale was used to measure wives' responses to societal and household pressures to conform to the norm of male-child preference.

In the survey wives were presented with a number of value laden statements and were asked to give their reactions. Table 7.14 measures their responses using a four point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly agree, to 4 = strongly disagree. The table shows that the majority of wives were in agreement with the societal norms favouring male-child preference. In no case was a mean score of over 2 recorded. The highest level of agreement corresponded with the statement that parents live on after their death through their male children (mean = 1.35) while there was less agreement with the statement that "families with only female children are considered to be barren" (mean score = 1.96).

The results of table 7.14 would seem to support the view that traditional societal attitudes are very dominant and may strongly affect wives' childbearing behaviour in favour of having more sons than daughters.

Table 7.14

Wives' responses to statements about male-child preference.

| | Level of agreement 1 N | 2 N | 3 N | 4 N | Mean score | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents live on through their male children after death (LD) | 743 | 173 | 70 | 13 | 1.35 | 1 |
| True death is when parents die without any sons (TD) | 468 | 279 | 170 | 82 | 1.87 | 5 |
| Only familes with male children are considered lucky (FL) | 587 | 155 | 187 | 70 | 1.74 | 3 |
| Sons support their families more than daughters (MS) | 528 | 216 | 168 | 87 | 1.81 | 4 |
| Under the conditions of the occupation daughters cause their parents more concern (OC) | 470 | 342 | 165 | 22 | 1.67 | 2 |
| Families that only have daughters are regarded as barren (FB) | 412 | 170 | 162 | 155 | 1.96 | 7 |
| Male children result in a wife gaining respect (WR) | 501 | 184 | 215 | 99 | 1.91 | 6 |

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = disagree
4 = strongly disagree
Source: Author's data, 1988.

However, wives' responses to each of the statements in Table 7.14 were far from homogeneous, and varied according to characteristics such as level of education, age, work experience and place of residence. Table 7.15 examines the influence of these behavioural determinants.

The chi-square test indicates that all these characteristics, with the exception of age, had a statistically significant association with attitudes to male-child preferences.

The strongest negative relationship was found between level of education and the degree of agreement with societal norms. For example, the proportion of wives who thought that families without male children were considered barren decreased from 83% among illiterate women to 36% for women with higher education.

Age was negatively associated with some attitudes, but not all. For instance, the proportion of wives who believed that daughters provided more or equal support to their familes as sons increased from 18% for wives aged over 60 years to 30% for younger wives (aged under 30 years). No significant relationship with age existed however relative to scores on the statement about "parents living on through their sons".

There were big differences between working wives responses and women who were not in waged employment. For instance, the proportion of wives who were strongly in agreement with the idea that "a family with more male children is a lucky one" decreased from 61% among non-salaried women to 21% among women in wage employment. The proportion of wives who voiced disagreement with the statement "families without male children are considered barren" increased from 30% among non-working wives to about 70% among wives in waged employment. Despite the small

proportion of working wives (7%) employment was shown to have an influence on child gender preference. This may be due to the fact that most working women are in the younger, more educated age groups.

Working women also enjoy a larger degree of independence from their husbands and families and therefore are more likely to have formed their own opinions on family size and child gender preference. Working women are certainly much less constrained by traditional cultural perceptions of their societal roles.

Finally, as far as place of residence was concerned, there is a considerable difference between wives responses in different sub areas with regard to male preference attitudes. These differences between the different sub areas are statistically significant at the 0.0001 level.

These strong geographical differences could be attributed to several factors:

First: Couples education. In general couples in urban areas are more educated than their rural counterparts.

Second: Better opportunities. Female children of urban areas are likely to have better educational and working opportunities.

Third: Outsiders influence. Parents in rural areas are likely to be influenced by outside influences when making decisions, mainly as a result of the close family relationships that chatacterise rural society.

Table 7.15

The chi-square test of the significance of the relation between behavioural characteristics** and wives' attitudes towards social norms listed in Table 7.14.

| | Statements*** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | L.D. | T.D. | M.S. | F.L. | O.C. | F.B. | W.R. |
| Education | | | | | | | |
| X2 calc. | 46.8 | 38.4 | 58.7 | 105.0 | 72.0 | 100.0 | 77.0 |
| d.f. | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| significance | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 |
| Age | | | | | | | |
| X2 calc. | 21.0 | 11.1 | 17.4 | 26.5 | 14.2 | 36.4 | 17.2 |
| d.f. | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| significance | .002 | *.085 | .007 | .0001 | *.027 | .0001 | .009 |
| Work | | | | | | | |
| X2 calc. | 50.7 | 22.0 | 24.1 | 62.1 | 62.2 | 43.3 | 32.1 |
| d.f. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| significance | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 |
| Area | | | | | | | |
| X2 calc. | 106.0 | 209.0 | 119.0 | 194.0 | 220.0 | 220.0 | 115.0 |
| d.f. | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| significance | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 | .0001 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

L.D. = parents live through their children after death
T.D. = true death is when parents die without having male children
M.S. = male children support the families more than female children
F.L. = only families that have male children are lucky
O.C. = under the occupations female cause more concern
F.B. = families that have only females are regarded as barren
W.R. = male children result in a wife gaining more respect

* Not significant at level 0.01

** Definitions of categories:

Education = Illiterate, Low, Middle, High.
Age = Young, Middle, Old.
Work = Employed, unemployed.
Area = Village, Town, City lower class, City middle class, City upper class, Refugee camps.

Fourth: Inheritance. Couples in rural areas prefer male children to inherit their land after their death in order to maintain family property under the same family name.

Fifth: Cultural diversity. The close knit society that characterises rural areas causes parents to be more strict and conservative especially in dealing with issues pertaining to their daughters.

Finally, it might be concluded that the modernization process, which has made the deepest impact in urban areas, also has a negative association with male child gender preference.

## 7.12 Conclusion

The findings of this chapter indicated that the vast majority of West Bank couples prefer to have more male than female children. 47% of husbands and 36% of wives have strong and very strong male-child preferences as compared with 9.6% of husbands and 21.7% of wives who prefer to have an equal number of males and females. It is of considerable importance to West Bank families for the first child to be male, mainly due to social and cultural factors. Gender preference becomes more strong and obvious especially if the family has fewer males than females or is without male children. Therefore, great attention should be given in fertility analysis in the Arab world to actual family composition.

Williamson (1976) found that women in Arab countries have a stronger male preference than elsewhere in the

world. While this may be true, the findings of this chapter show that husbands are more concerned about male-child preference than their wives. As the chapter has also shown, West Bank couples may have stronger male child preferences than other Arabs because of their perceptions of the political situation.

Socio-economic and demographic variables such as urbanisation, age, educational level and work status, have significant influence on couples opinions, attitudes and beliefs towards gender preference. Yet cultural factors still influence peoples attitudes towards male child preference, despite the fact that females are sometimes more supportive of their families than males.

Gender preference is an important factor in sustaining high fertility levels because:

1. Couples will exceed their desired family size in order to achieve the desired number of male children. Sometimes the gap between desired and actual family size may therefore be attributed to gender preference.
2. A couples willingness to use contraceptives may increase, especially when they have achieved the desired number of male children. It is also to be expected that the birth interval will be wider after the birth of a son than the birth of a daughter.
3. Families with strong male child preference normally prefer to start and end their childbearing period with a male child.

# CHAPTER 8

## DESIRED FAMILY SIZE AND THE CONSISTENCY OF THE DATA

### 8.1 Introduction

Desired family size is considered to be one of the most important measures of fertility preference. This variable has attracted the attention of the researcher because of the importance of understanding the factors moulding reproductive behaviour and the circumstances and cultural norms and values which influence decision making on this issue. The analysis of desired family size lies at the interface between fertility attitudes and behaviour (Lightbourne, 1985).

The analysis of desired family size reveals the operation of several factors pertinent to parental decision making such as family structure, family system, marriage relationships, power structures in decision making, and attitudes to the value of children. Investigation of desired family size, however, faces some drawbacks that influence the quality and the kind of data which can be obtained and which are used in making inferences and drawing generalisations about the topic.

This chapter commences by evaluating the theoretical basis of analysing family size preferences, and the criticisms of the methods used by others which have in some cases produced misleading results. This chapter also contains some recommendations which may help future researchers overcome some of these difficulties. The final

part of the chapter will examine the consistency of female responses to the authors survey questions on desired family size. This is done by examining responses for women in the reproductive age cohorts to questions about additional births and about whether the last birth was "wanted or unwanted". This chapter, therefore, forms the basis on which evaluation of survey results reported in Chapter 9 is based.

## 8.2 Importance of family size desired

Family formation is undoubtedly a sequential process carried in relation to a complex set of expectations and preferences about many aspects of life, of which preference for a certain number of children is only one aspect. Questions on desired family size have routinely been incorporated in fertility questionnaires in most developing countries. The concept of desired family size is generally believed to be meaningful to most respondents, and offers some distinct benefits to researchers studying a society undergoing socio-economic and cultural changes, where voluntary fertility control is reasonably widespread and effective.

Some couples define the desired number of children at an early stage of their married life, and condition their reproductive behaviour to achieve their target. Others delay the decision or do not even make any decision at all as to the number and sex of the children they want, until they already have a certain number of children (boys and

girls). Kiser and Whelpton (1958) speculate that collecting data from young people before marriage would be valuable, because the concept of desired family size may develop at an even earlier stage. Research suggests that for most couples the desired number of children is not immutable, but changes over time according to their circumstances. Studies of the stability of short and long run expectations remain too few. Campbell et al. (1974) have suggested, however, that highly educated respondents are likely to have more stability in their responses to studies on fertility preference than less well educated couples.

The gap between preferences and actual behaviour differs from one society to another and between one area and another in the same country. Many factors play a role in increasing or decreasing this gap, such as the level of compliance with social norms and couples ability to make independent decisions, the dominance or otherwise of religious teaching, on attitudes to family size and family planning, the nature of marital relationships and couples communication within different family structures, personal characteristics and the availability and efficiency of contraceptive usage in controlling births and in avoiding unwanted conceptions.

To identify the factors which affect the gap between what the family size is which couples would prefer, and the number of children actually born in each family, is very useful for the policy maker. It helps in the planning and

implementation of family planning policies.

If the gap between desired and actual family size is either not too great and is consistent with known parameters, then desired family size can be used as a predictor of fertility behaviour (Bumpass and Westoff, 1970). Campbell et al. (1974) found that the expectations expressed by a sample of women in the reproductive age cohorts were remarkably accurate in making aggregate predictions of the actual fertility rate for the cohorts for the next five year period.

Detailed analysis of family size preferences may therefore help to give a better understanding of the factors which will affect future fertility patterns on the one hand, and on the other hand, may in fact provide a reasonably good predictive base of the usage of contraception. Studies in Bangladesh and Thailand have shown that women who have already reached or exceeded their desired family size are more likely to report the use of contraception than women who have families less than their desired size (Ahmed, 1981; Knodel and Prachaubmoh, 1973).

To summarise the discussions so far, one can suggest four main benefits from the analysis of desired family size:

1. It may give a better basis for predicting fertility.
2. It may help in giving a better understanding of the decision making process with regard to fertility behaviour.

3. It helps clarify the concept of wanted and unwanted children.
4. It provides a better understanding of the connection between desired family size and motives for contraceptive use.

## 8.3 Desired family size: Criticisms

Despite the importance of studying desired family size, the validity of such studies have been criticised by some researchers (Hauser, 1967; Ryder, 1973; Monnier, 1988) on the basis of the poor reliability of the measures used. Researchers must therefore make great efforts in order to get sufficiently good quality data to make their analysis of any value.

Some researchers (Hauser, 1967; Kirk, 1972) have argued that the concept of family size preference is a meaningless notion in developing societies because respondents in traditional societies and in some developing countries may be unable to give a numerical answer or meaningful quantitative response to the question "How many children would you prefer to have during your life?" Sometimes responses may be qualitative or uninformed, such as "I dont know; its up to God; as many as I can". This may be due to the fact that people in these societies believe that the number of children is not for them to determine.

In West Bank culture as well as in most of the Islamic world, many people are not used to thinking of these issues and may be unaccustomed to thinking of future

family developments. The majority believe that having or not having children is out of their control. This applies especially to family composition and the gender mix of their children (Ata, 1986). The high proportion of illiteracy in many developing societies and the low portion of people using contraceptives supports this view and may make responses lack any intrinsic meaning (Hauser, 1967).

Despite this kind of criticism, Morsa (1966) found from a survey conducted in Tunisia that only 5% of respondents were not able to give numerical answers. Also Stycos (1965) in Peru found similar results with only 4-6% of respondents refusing to give a numerical answer. The author found in his study on the West Bank that only 6% of respondents declined to answer all the questions in the questionnaire and a further 4% refused to answer some questions. The main reasons for their objections were, however, political rather than conceptual (all incomplete questionnaires were eliminated from the study).

The second main criticism of family size preference studies is that the total number of children preferred tends to be a reflection of de facto family size. This will especially be a problem among those who have completed their families and are no longer in the reproductive cohorts. No one can deny that actual childbearing experience as well as changes in circumstances will lead couples to adjust their preference as time passes. Monnier (1988) found that women who revised their

intentions downwards tended to have more children than women who revised their intentions upward. Ryder (1973) has also suggested that desired family size is indeterminate in meaning because it combines varying factual components (number of living children) with varying attitude components (number of future children wanted).

A third cause of confusion is the wording of questions on desired family size. Respondents may simply evaluate their responses and select one which he/she believes presents a favourable image to the interviewer (Cook and Selltiz, 1964).

Fourth, different people have different objectives and furthermore, the same individual may have different objectives at different points in time, since objectives are always in flux (Leibenstein, 1981). Some respondents may even choose a random answer, especially if they have never thought about their future reproductive behaviour.

Fifth, most fertility and fertility attitudes surveys focus on women in reproductive age responses, neglecting the husband who may have the authority and final say in family decisions. The necessity of researching husband's opinions is especially important in fertility attitude surveys in developing countries. Thus it is important to allow marriage partners to express their opinions separately and if possible without being influenced by their spouses. It is important for studies to be carried out on all types of couples: i.e. couples with and without children, couples in the childbearing period and couples

who have finished their childbearing span. Such studies are important in order to draw comparisons and conclusions about trends in attitudes and behaviour.

## 8.4 Consistency of Responses

It is possible to measure the consistency of responses on desired family size in two ways. Firstly, one can use follow up surveys over different periods. (Monnier, 1988) checked the consistency of desired family size data in France by using this method. The data was consistent in 80% of cases. Over the period of his surveys (1974, 1976 and 1979) the consistency decreased with people generally raising their responses to questions on desired number of children. It is to be expected that the consistency of data in developing countries will be lower and it is also to be expected that the consistency will decrease the greater the period between the initial survey and the follow up survey.

A second approach is to use different measures of desired family size such as asking whether the last birth was wanted or not wanted and comparing this with participants response regarding desired family size. The researcher will use this latter type of measure in this thesis to examine the consistency of the data for women in the reproductive age in the West Bank.

Reliability and validity of data has become one of the first and most essential steps in any attempts to study fertility preferences, particularly in developing

countries. Freedman et al. (1975) found considerable consistency in their study between stated desires and further behaviour. Higher levels of consistency help to increase confidence in a surveys findings and the use to which a study can be put. If a survey has proven consistency, and if women's preferred family size is much greater than that achieved, then it is to be expected that their expressed desires will be reflected in responses to questions about having additional children and whether the last child was wanted. Checking consistency of preference data in this way is a reasonable test to see whether the responses really reflect the couple's opinions and attitudes or are merely random answers given by respondents without any thought.

Inconsistency between responses may not, however, imply that random answers are being given. It is possible for example that a women may not want anymore children, yet may become pregnant. This may be due to two factors:

1. The husband wants more children and proves to be the key decision maker in the family.
2. The women fails to use contraceptives efficiently.

If either of these are the case then children may continue to be born, while female survey respondents continue to state that the last birth was an unwanted child.

## 8.5 Consistency of West Bank survey responses on desired family size

Table 8.1 summarises the consistency of the authors survey data gathered from women in the reproductive ages in the sample. The table indicates a remarkable pattern. It can be seen from the table that almost 90% of respondents who said that they wanted more children, also stated their desired family size as greater than their actual family size. On the other hand, the table also indicates that about 32% of respondents said they wanted no additional children yet gave a desired family size which exceeded their total number of living children. The relationship between spouses, the authority of husbands, the pressure of social norms and religious teaching, women's health and the political situation all play a part in accounting for the presence of inconsistancies in the author's survey.

In fact inconsistencies appear in several cases in Table 8.1. There are those respondents who wanted no additional children yet reported desired family sizes in excess of their actual family size. Second there are those respondents who stated that they wanted additional children yet gave preferred family sizes less than or equal to their actual family size. These sources of inconsistency are in numerical terms relatively small compared with the high proportion of consistent responses.

Table 8.1

Percentage of the women of fecund age, who would like an additional child, by number of living children.

| | Prefer less than living | Prefer equals living | Prefer exceeds living | Total % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| More children wanted | 5.3 (I) | 4.7 (I) | 90 | 100 |
| No more children wanted | 30.3 | 37.3 | 32.4 (I) | 100 |

(I) indicates inconsistent combination.

Source: Author's data, 1988.

The question whether wives wanted additional children or not was easy to answer. It was answered even by wives who had given little thought to the number of children they might want. Table 8.2 shows that the existence in each sub-area of a high percentage of married women in the fecund ages who did not want any additional children. The proportion rises from low levels in the towns (about 24%) to high proportions in the city upper class areas (about 40%).

In addition the table cross tabulates responses by the number of living children in the family. This helps to counteract the impression of an unlimited desire for additional children in all sub areas. For example, in families with four children and less, between 11% to 27% of

women wanted no additional children, while in cases where women already had more than 8 children the proportion of wives who wanted no additional children actually declined and ranged from 6.4% in the lower class areas to about 27% in middle class areas.

Table 8.2

Percentage of women not wanting additional children in each sub-area classified by number of living children.

| Area | Number of living children | | | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1,2 | 3,4 | 5,6 | 7,8 | 9,10 | 10+ | Women |
| Total | 1.7 | 13.9 | 31.3 | 27.0 | 17.8 | 8.3 | 30.7 |
| Small villages | 2.8 | 9.7 | 25.0 | 29.2 | 19.4 | 13.9 | 31.3 |
| Towns | 2.1 | 10.4 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 22.9 | 14.6 | 23.8 |
| City,lower class | - | 19.4 | 35.5 | 32.3 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 37.8 |
| City,middle class | - | 18.2 | 40.9 | 13.6 | 27.3 | - | 27.2 |
| City,upper class | - | 26.7 | 50.0 | 16.7 | 6.7 | - | 40.0 |
| Refugee camps | 3.7 | 7.4 | 40.7 | 25.9 | 22.2 | - | 34.2 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

There has been an increasing amount of evidence to support the notion that a large number of women wish to restrict childbearing long before reaching the stopping point. Postponing rather than terminating childbearing is one major force behind the substantial number of contraceptive users who state that they want more children. The main conclusion which can be drawn from Table 8.2 is that in general the proportion of women not wanting any

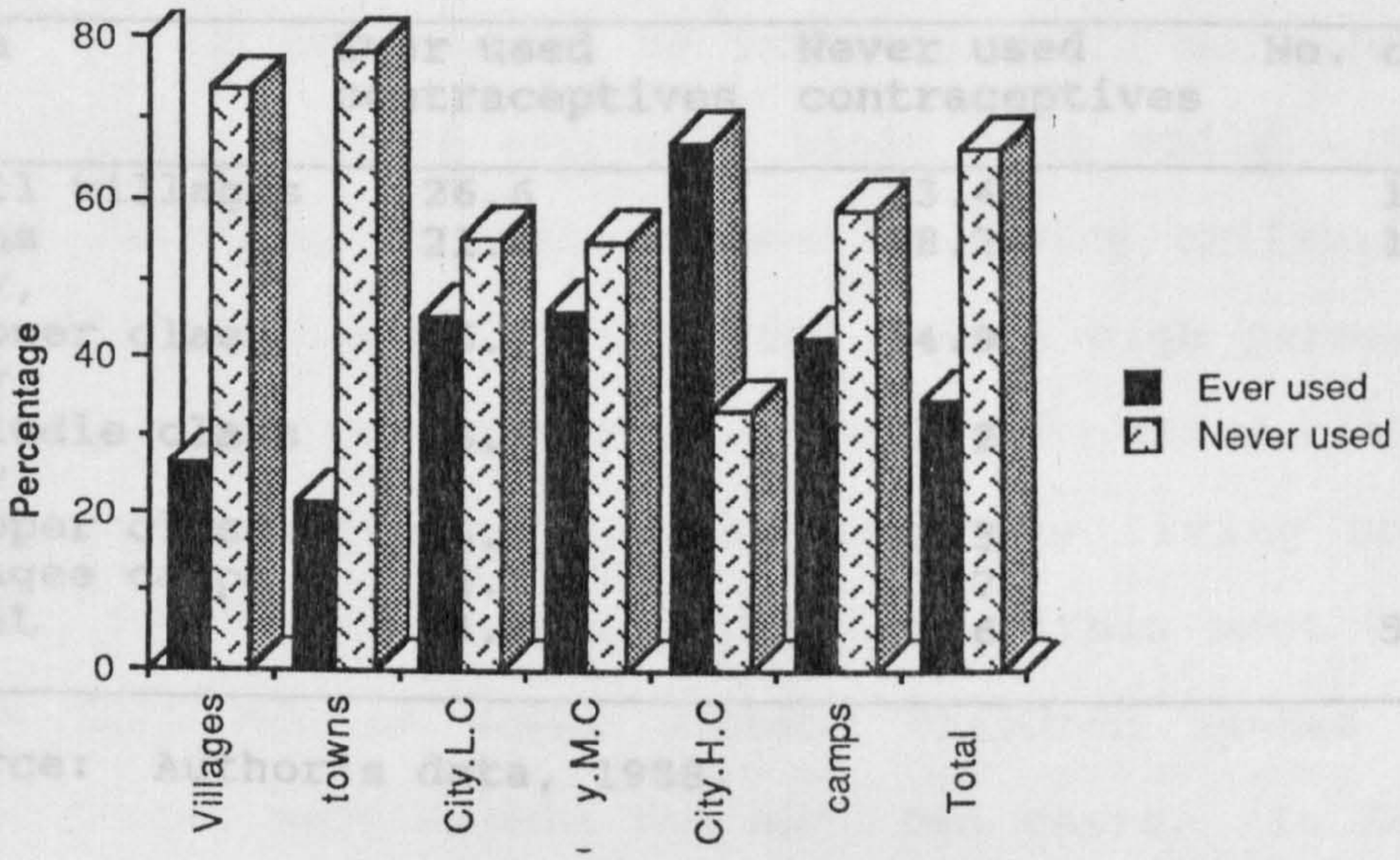
additional children increases with the number of living children in the family up until a threshhold of 7 or 8 children. Beyond this the relationship seems to break down.

Table 8.3 shows the average number of women in sub-areas who want additional children whether they used modern contraceptives or not. The table shows that two thirds of women who want additional children never used any kind of modern contraceptives, while the remaining women used contraceptives in order to increase the birth interval.

The percentage varies greatly with each sub area. The majority of women who had used contraceptives were found in city upper class areas (66.3%) while the lowest percentage was found in the towns (21.8%). contraceptives to increase the birth interval. The table shows that more than five out of ten women who had ever used contraceptives, said they also wanted additional children. This percentage varies greatly by different sub-areas. However, the majority of the women who had ever used contraceptives were found in the city's middle class (68%), while the lowest percentage was found in the towns (47%).

Table 8.3 indicates that the proportion of women who used contraceptives and want more children increases with the urbanisation process. From the table it is apparent that the proportion of women in urban areas who used contraceptives and want more children is almost twice the proportion of rural women (25%).

Figure 8.1: Wives who want additional children by contraceptive use.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 8.3.

The differences between the sub areas may be attributed to several factors such as culture norms, social pressures, availability of and accessibility to contraceptives, educational level, womens work and the woman's role in making decisions on the use of contraceptives.

The existence of a widespread female desire to postpone births introduces the question of the timing of births. Table 8.4 summarises the survey results with regard to this issue and indicates that half of the women in the survey who wanted another child, would prefer to have the next birth within a two year time interval, while the other half would prefer to delay the next birth for more than two years.

Table 8.3

Percentage of women who want additional children in different sub areas, by their use of modern contraceptives.

| Area | Ever used contraceptives | Never used contraceptives | No. of women |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small villages | 26.6 | 73.4 | 154 |
| Towns | 21.8 | 78.2 | 147 |
| City, lower class | 45.1 | 54.9 | 51 |
| City, middle class | 45.8 | 54.2 | 59 |
| City, upper class | 66.3 | 33.3 | 45 |
| Refugee camps | 42.3 | 57.7 | 52 |
| TOTAL | 34.4 | 65.6 | 508 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 8.4

Percentage of women who want the next child within two years, by place of residence.

| Area | Small villages | Towns | City, lower class | City, middle class | City, upper class | Refugee camps | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Within 2 yrs | 66.2 | 59.9 | 39.2 | 33.9 | 37.8 | 40.3 | 52.9 |
| Not within 2 yrs | 33.8 | 40.1 | 60.8 | 66.1 | 62.2 | 59.7 | 47.1 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 8.4 shows considerable spatial variations in attitudes to child spacing. For instance, the proportion of women in small villages who want another child within two years is twice the proportion of those who want to delay births. In city lower class areas the results are quite the inverse to the rural situation. Table 8.3 and

8.4 reflect the relative importance of contraceptive use particularly in the city and the refugee camps, to control the birth interval.

It is interesting to investigate in more detail the attitudes of women who want their next child within two years relative to their number of living children and by sub-area. It would be expected that a high percentage of the women who want their next child soon would either not have any children, or would have few living children. Table 8.5 confirms this pattern. Within most sub-areas more than 95% of women without children wanted to have their first baby within the next two years. In West Bank culture it is important to have the first child immediately after marriage. The lower percentages in rural and city middle class areas may be due to some responses by infertile women. More than two thirds of women who had only one child preferred to have the next birth soon, while among women who already had between two and six living children about one third stated a preference to have the next birth soon. The proportion of women who wanted their next child soon, drops steadily with increased family size (Table 8.5), but increases again in families with more than five living children. Gender preference, as discussed in the previous chapter, may be one reason explaining this reversal in responses.

There are two points that should be taken into consideration with regard to the desire for postponement of having additional children. They are:

1. If the desired period of postponement is relatively short, and the number of children desired is low, then contraception to delay the birth may have less influence on fertility, but it makes women more likely to use contraceptives successfully to stop the birth when they achieve the desired number of children.

2. If the women desire a large number of children and start using contraceptives after having their first or second child so as to postpone other births, then this might have a greater impact on fertility (by delaying births) than it does have on the case already outlined above.

8.6 Consistency of last birth measurements

To examine the consistency between preferred family size and whether the last birth was wanted or unwanted, the percentage distribution of responses by wives in the fecund ages was examined. The results in Table 8.6 show that 91% of those who wanted their last birth had attitudes consistent with their behaviour. By contrast, of the women who did not want their last birth, only 29.2% gave consistent attitudinal responses.

There are several possible explanations for the high proportion of women who gave inconsistent responses. One of them is "after the event" rationalisation of their responses by upward revision of their desired family size. These people nevertheless admitted in terms of their responses that they had stopped wanting additional

children. Direct evidence of rationalisation comes from Stycos (1964) in his study in Haiti, where he found that preferred family size increases by one child among 72% of women whose desired family size equalled the actual size at the time of his first interview, but who then had further children before being re-interviewed. It is difficult to measure the level of decision makers rationality in the West Bank through only one survey, but the researcher expected that a high proportion of women (may be more than in Haiti) would have rational views on desired family size.

Table 8.5

Proportion of women wanting the next child within 2 years, by number of living children, classified by sub-area.

| | Number of living children | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4,5 | 6,7 | 8+ |
| Total | 96.8 | 64.6 | 39.1 | 38.8 | 29.9 | 38.6 | 54.8 |
| Small villages | 95.8 | 81.5 | 58.8 | 61.9 | 42.4 | 41.2 | 86.7 |
| Towns | 96.7 | 77.3 | 45.4 | 42.9 | 50.0 | 52.2 | 16.7 |
| City,lower class | 100 | 66.7 | 14.3 | 33.3 | 7.1 | - | 50.0 |
| City,middle class | 92.9 | 36.4 | 20.0 | - | 6.7 | 16.7 | - |
| City,upper class | 100 | 83.3 | 40.0 | 8.3 | 9.1 | - | - |
| Refugee camps | 100 | 10.0 | 23.1 | 66.7 | 30.0 | 66.7 | 50.0 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 8.6

Attitude to the last birth classified in relation to desired number of children.

| | Desire less than actual family size | Desire equals actual family size | Desire exceeds actual family size | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Last birth wanted | 9.2 (I) | 18.2 | 72.6 | |
| Last birth not wanted | 29.2 | 3.9 (I) | 66.9 (I) | |

(I) indicates inconsistent combination.

Source: Author's data.

As with Table 8.1, Table 8.6 includes results which seem irrational or inconsistent. Compared with Table 8.1, the level of inconsistency seems greater in comparing the data on last birth with desired family size. Some respondents may have misconstrued what was meant by the question about desire for the last birth, and may have thought the question referred to whether they wanted additional children at that time, so that some of the "unwanted" last births were mis-timed rather than permanently unwanted. This, howeover, can only partly explain the anomaly.

The investigation of the consistency of responses to questions about the last birth suggest other factors are also important:

1. The timing of births: if a women would have preferred to postpone the last birth, and the last birth occurred sooner than planned, then it may have been reported as

unwanted even if desired family size had not been reached.

2. If the family wanted the last birth to be male because the family had an equal number of sons and daughters or more girls than boys then the last birth may have been unwanted if a daughter was born.

3. It is also true that most families in the West Bank prefer the first born child to be male, whereas if it was a girl again, the "last" birth may be defined as unwanted, even although the couple intended to have many more children.

## 8.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed and examined the possibility of using desired family size as a measure of demand for children and as a predictor of future fertility in the West Bank, as well as in many developing countries. The material presented found no evidence to preclude considering measures of desired family size as a measure of demand.

In order to examine the reliability and validity of data on the desired family size, both the desire for more children and the favourable attitudes towards the last birth are used for the analysis of consistency of wives responses. The results reveal that most inconsistencies were found amongst those women whose desired family size exceeded their actual number of living children, but who wanted no more children (32.4%), compared with only 10% for

women who wanted more children despite their actual number of living children being equal to or exceeding their desired family size. This result may be considered as an indication of a decreasing demand for children. It points to the need for couples to use efficient contraceptive methods to close the gap between intentions and practice in family planning.

It was found that a high proportion of the women (70%) who did not want or favour their last birth were those whose desired family sizes more or equal to their actual number of living children. Less than 10% of women who had exceeded their desired family size, suggested that they want their last birth for other reasons such as gender preference, birth order, conflict between spouses attitudes to family size and to the changing of life patterns.

# CHAPTER 9

## DESIRED FAMILY SIZE MEASUREMENT

### 9.1 Introduction

In the last chapter the consistency of desired family size data was investigated. Several approaches can be used in estimating desired family size. The first section of this chapter will discuss the three main approaches. Since each of these approaches may produce different results it is necessary to compare the results of each of these various approaches with the total marital fertility rate (TMFR). The second part of this chapter, using one of the measures discussed above, analyses the differential between desired average family size and TMFR in relation to several economic, socio-cultural, demographic and geographic variables.

### 9.2 Measurements of desired family size

There is no one standard method of measuring family size preferences (Lightbourne and MacDonald, 1982). The three approaches used in this research are as follows:

1. The conventional approach. This approach depends on direct questioning of all respondent's preferences. The measure is flexible and can be addressed to both husbands and wives of different ages. There has often proven to be a strong correlation between the results and actual family size where contraceptive methods are used effectively. However, for any given family the results have been shown to be unstable with estimates

of desired family size being revised in line with reproductive behaviour.

2. The stopping point approach. This is restricted to married women in the fecund cohorts (15-49), and estimates desired family by indirect methods. The calculation rests on the preferred family size of women who have stopped having children and who have no intention of having further children in the future. Different approaches can be used in order to estimate the stopping point. For example, Rodrigues and Trussell (1981) have estimated the number of children respondents would have before stopping childbearing, while Lightbourne (1977) measured it through the estimation of the number of living children respondents would prefer to have in order to allow for the probability of child mortality. The researcher, however, based his estimation on the actual family size at which a woman would not want any additional children, in order to avoid the problems that might arise as a result of gender preference. Rodrigues and Trussel's (1981) approach leads to a higher estimation of desired family size relative to the researcher's method.

3. The total desired fertility rate. This approach is also restricted to the analysis of women's perceptions. Estimates of desired family size are calculated relative to the stated total desired fertility rate for

women who do not want additional children and who also hold a negative attitude towards the birth of their last child. This is the most appropriate method that can be used by researchers who are interested in fertility implications.

These three alternatives are the main approaches used in measuring desired family size and can be used in examining variations in results, and in comparing these results with the total marital fertility rate.

## 9.3 Results of the three approaches when tested on the West Bank

Table 9.1 indicates the mean desired family size achieved using the conventional approach. The average size is substantially lower among younger women aged 15-19 than amongst older women aged 30-34 and over. Substantial geographical variations are also evident. The results suggest that younger women really prefer less children than older women, and if younger women succeed in using contraceptive methods effectively then fertility reductions in the West Bank can be expected in the near future.

Comparing the conventional approach and the stopping point method is possible by comparing columns 4 and 5 of Table 9.1. Column 5 shows that the average family size using the stopping point method is about 5.7 children. The figure ranges between 6.45 children in towns and 4.51 children in the city's middle class. The average appears lower than the actual family size for all women in the sample, and also for the average family size in each sub

Table 9.1

Desired family size, measured by direct and indirect methods; conventional, stopping point, total desired fertility rates and marital fertility rates.

| | 1 Age 15-19 | 2 Age 30-34 | 3 Age 45-49 | 4 All women | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 5.69 | 6.60 | 8.22 | 7.18 | 5.68 | 7.10 | 6.44 | 6.24 |
| Small villages | 6.43 | 7.00 | 8.57 | 7.94 | 6.31 | 7.53 | 6.97 | 6.71 |
| Towns | 6.67 | 6.69 | 8.45 | 7.36 | 6.45 | 7.28 | 7.10 | 7.00 |
| City lower class | 4.50 | 7.31 | 6.88 | 6.81 | 5.34 | 6.53 | 6.26 | 6.01 |
| City middle class | 5.33 | 6.19 | 8.67 | 6.86 | 4.51 | 5.98 | 5.98 | 5.98 |
| City upper class | 4.00 | 5.86 | 5.43 | 5.27 | 5.06 | 5.04 | 4.22 | 3.87 |
| Refugee camps | 6.25 | 5.73 | 8.80 | 7.59 | 5.02 | 6.50 | 4.90 | 4.44 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Notes:

Column 1-4: Average desired family size using the conventional method

Column 5: Average family size using stopping point approach (do not want additional children).

Column 6: Total marital fertility rate (TMFR).

Column 7: Desired total fertility rate - birth deleted if actual exceeds desired

Column 8: Desired total fertility rate - births deleted if last birth was unwanted

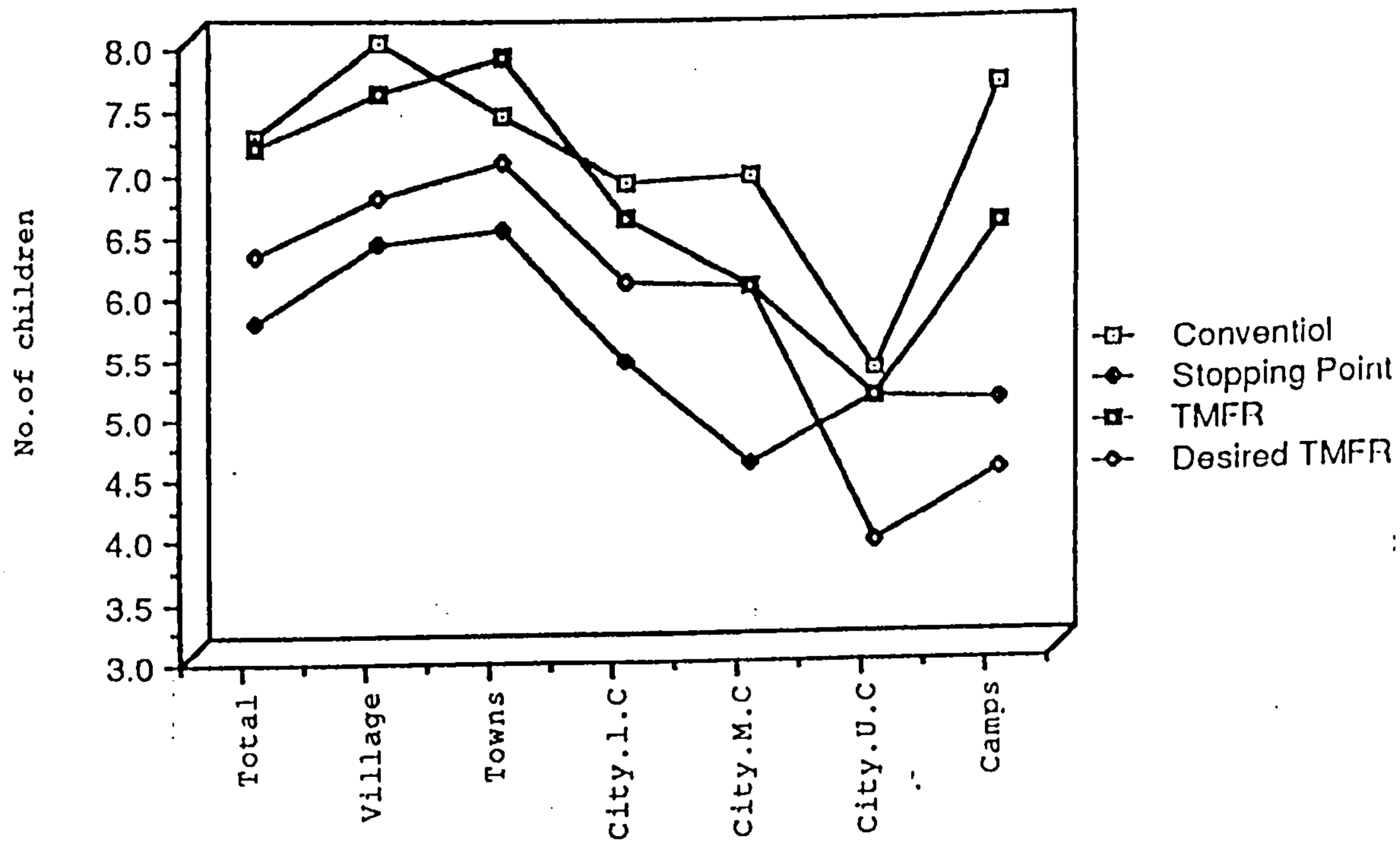
area. The figures are also all consistently lower than the estimates generated by the conventional approach. The stability of the average figures generated by the stopping point method depends on the efficient use of contraceptives to prevent any unplanned births. The researcher was doubtful about the accuracy of the figures generated by this approach for this reason, since a large number of women in the West Bank do not make efficient use of contraceptives.

For example the survey findings indicated that only 41% of all women in the fecund age cohorts made efficient use of contraceptives. This percentage increased to only 58% amongst women who did not want additional children. On the other hand, the proportion of women who do not want additional children and do not use modern contraceptives is almost 42%. Of this group, 33% did not use contraceptives because of religious reasons, 14% because of their husbands' objections and the remainder due to various reasons such as cost and health reasons. Of those who had used contraceptives 28.3% had subsequently stopped using them because of health and social reasons. These results imply that contraceptives are not strongly favoured by women in the West Bank and even where they are used they are often ineffective. As a result family planning is often beyond the control of Palestinian women.

Two measures of desired total fertility rate are presented in columns 7 and 8 in table 9.1. These have been calculated relative to the TMFR in relation to unwanted

births. By contrasting the desired total fertility rate with the actual total fertility rate it can be seen how much fertility would decline if unwanted births were prevented. In most cases the differential is of the order of one child. This result emphasises the importance of effective family planning programmes to reduce fertility levels.

Figure 9.1: Measurement of desired family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 9.1.

The desired total fertility rate in column 8 is lower than that of column 7. This reflects the large number of women who did not want the birth of their last child.

The discussion above has described three methods for analysing desired family size: conventional, stopping

point and total desired fertility rate. Several conclusions have emerged from comparing the results of the different methods. These conclusions are:

1. The stopping point approach seems to give results substantially lower than the conventional approach.
2. Comparing the total fertility rate and the average family preferred size revealed by the conventional approach (column 8 and column 4), would lead to the expectation that little change in fertility levels will take place in the near future, since the total fertility rate is very similar to the average desired family size (7.10 and 7.18 children respectively). However, a change might be expected in fertility levels, if the total desired fertility rate of young women aged 15-19 is achieved and not exceeded.
3. Rural areas and refugee camps have a higher desired number of children than city dwellers, regardless of the approach used, and as shown by table 9.1.
4. The results reveal the importance of efficient contraceptive use in bringing the desired fertility rate in line with the total marital fertility rate.

## 9.4 Differentials of desired family size

As outlined in the literature review, socio-economic and cultural forces are fundamental determinants of desired family size. Analysis of these forces can yield considerable insights into the causes of the trends observed in the West Bank. This section of the chapter

presents data on the average number of children desired by husbands and wives and relates this information to other characteristics of the West Bank population. Differences in desired family size will be examined relative to:

a) Socio-cultural factors such as religion and education levels of both husbands and wives.

b) Economic factors; family income, home size and work status of both husbands and wives.

c) Demographic factors; age of respondents, age at first marriage, duration of marriage and child mortality.

d) Geographical factors relating to type of residence.

Substantial geographical variations exist throughout the West Bank in the level of socio-economic development and in the extent of the cultural changes which have taken place. The analysis of these differences is related only to information about desired family size from using the conventional approach illustrated above.

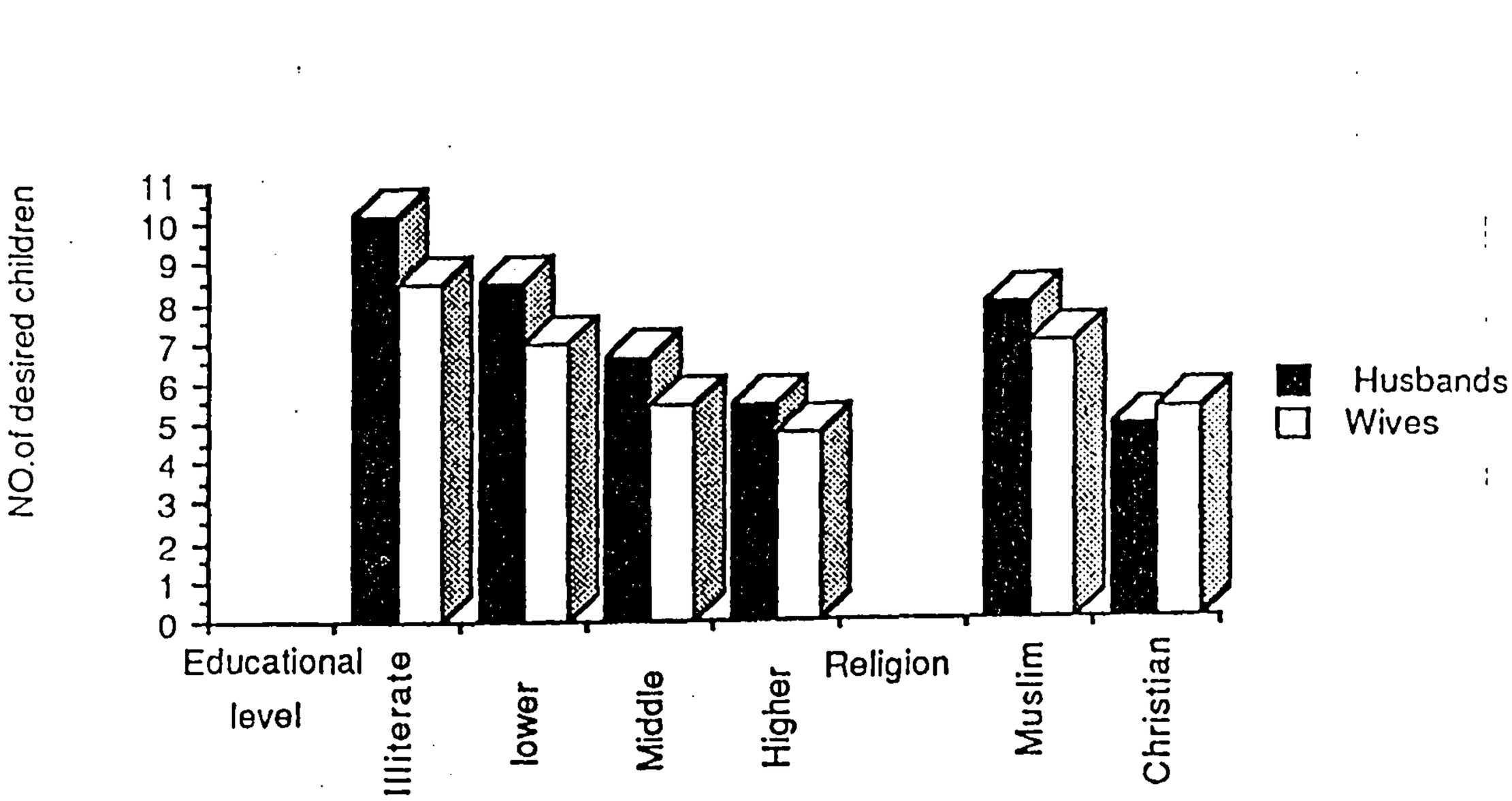
It is known that most socio-economic and cultural variables are highly inter-related, and sometimes the effect of one variable may impact on another. For example, there are known to be strong relationships between age of respondent, age at marriage and duration of marriage. These strong inter-relationships make it difficult to determine precise causality.

### 9.4.1 Socio-cultural variables

The educational level and religion of husbands and wives was investigated. The impact of male and female educational levels on their desired number of children has

been much researched. Table 9.2 shows that the expected relationships hold also on the West Bank. The table shows that the gap in aspirations between illiterate couples, and couples with a high level of education is very large. The average number of children desired declines sharply from 10.22 children to 5.47 children, and from 8.46 to 4.71 children for the husbands and wives respectively in these educational categories. Further improvements in educational levels, particularly female education would tend to reduce the preferred number of children, and thus reduce future fertility levels.

Figure 9.2: Desired family size by socio-cultural variables.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 9.2.

Although the West Bank survey does not permit deeper analysis of the causal links, the literature would suggest the following relationships. The influence of the education level is expected to be greater when a husband with higher education marries a woman with the same level of education. It is assumed and expected that increased levels of education in the population and expansion of schooling will lead to fertility decline by reducing the number of children desired.

Table 9.2

Socio-cultural variables and average family size desired by husbands and wives.

| Variables | Husbands Average desired family size | Wives Average desired family size |
|---|---|---|
| **Education** | | |
| Illiterate | 10.22 | 8.46 |
| Lower education | 8.47 | 7.01 |
| Middle education | 6.64 | 5.44 |
| Higher education | 5.47 | 4.71 |
| **Religion** | | |
| Muslim | 7.94 | 7.02 |
| Christian | 4.86 | 5.28 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

The effect of education on fertility levels thus may appear in the following forms:

1) Education will increase the value of parents time, thus increasing the opportunity costs of raising children.

2) Education may have an influence on peoples' perceptions of traditional values and accelerate the process of social change.

3) Education helps women achieve their ambitions, and exposes them more to western values.

4) Education reduces the children's financial contribution to the household by delaying their entry to the labour market and increases the cost of children through the transformation of children's roles (Schultz, 1973; Fargues, 1989).

5) Education delays the age at first marriage for both males and females, consequently, reducing the supply of children.

Schultz (1973) found that education diminished fertility preferences for all ages. Chenery and Syrkin (1977) also found an inverse relationship between school enrollment and desired fertility.

A second socio-cultural variable investigated was that of religion. As was expected, and as has been confirmed by data from the World Fertility Survey in most Islamic Countries, Muslims have a higher level of fertility and a higher desired number of children by comparison with other religious groups (Lightbourne & Macdonald, 1982). Table 9.2 shows that a big difference existed in the author's survey between Muslim and Christian couples' attitudes to average family size. This exists despite the couples being drawn from the same culture and the same

physical environment. The table also shows that Christian husbands desired on average three children less than their Muslim counterparts. Muslim wives desire on average two children more than their Christian counterparts. Therefore, it is interesting to note that Muslim husbands desired more children than their wives, while on the contrary, Christian husbands preferred fewer children than their wives.

### 9.4.2 Economic factors

Economic factors in this section are represented by various variables such as family income, house size, and the work status of husbands and wives.

Income levels have been shown to be associated with the peoples' attitudes to the importance and value of time and consequently with couples attitudes to family size (Bulatao and Lee, 1983). Couples tastes change with increases in income, resulting in a desire to have fewer children (in whom they invest more effort). Table 9.3 shows the relationship identified in the author's survey between the level of family income and the average number of children desired by the husband and wife. As expected family income appears to be negatively associated with the average desired number of children. The spread of values for women is greater in relation to income levels.

The size of house as measured by number of rooms is one means of examining the economic status of a family, and can be used as an indicator of family income. The reason behind using this variable as well as that of family

income, is that the author was concerned about the data reliability on all income questions given the West Bank's unusual situation which involves Israel imposing high taxes on all incomes. This inevitably has encouraged people in the occupied territories to give inaccurate figures to all household income surveys (as the researcher observed during his field study in 1988).

Table 9.3

Economic variables and average desired family size for both husbands and wives.

| Variables | Husband Average desired family size | Wife Average desired family size |
|---|---|---|
| **Income (in Jordanian Dinars per month** | | |
| Low, income less than 100 | 8.15 | 7.44 |
| Medium, between 100-200 | 8.16 | 7.16 |
| High, between 200-400 | 7.53 | 6.62 |
| Very high, more than 400 | 6.62 | 5.63 |
| **Home size** | | |
| 1 room | 6.8 | 6.22 |
| 2 and 3 rooms | 7.8 | 7.04 |
| 4 and 5 rooms | 8.3 | 7.13 |
| More than 5 rooms | 8.6 | 7.21 |
| **Work status** | | |
| Unemployed | 9.29 | 7.15 |
| Employed, with wages | 7.35 | 4.56 |
| Self-employed | 8.25 | - |
| Employer | 7.96 | - |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

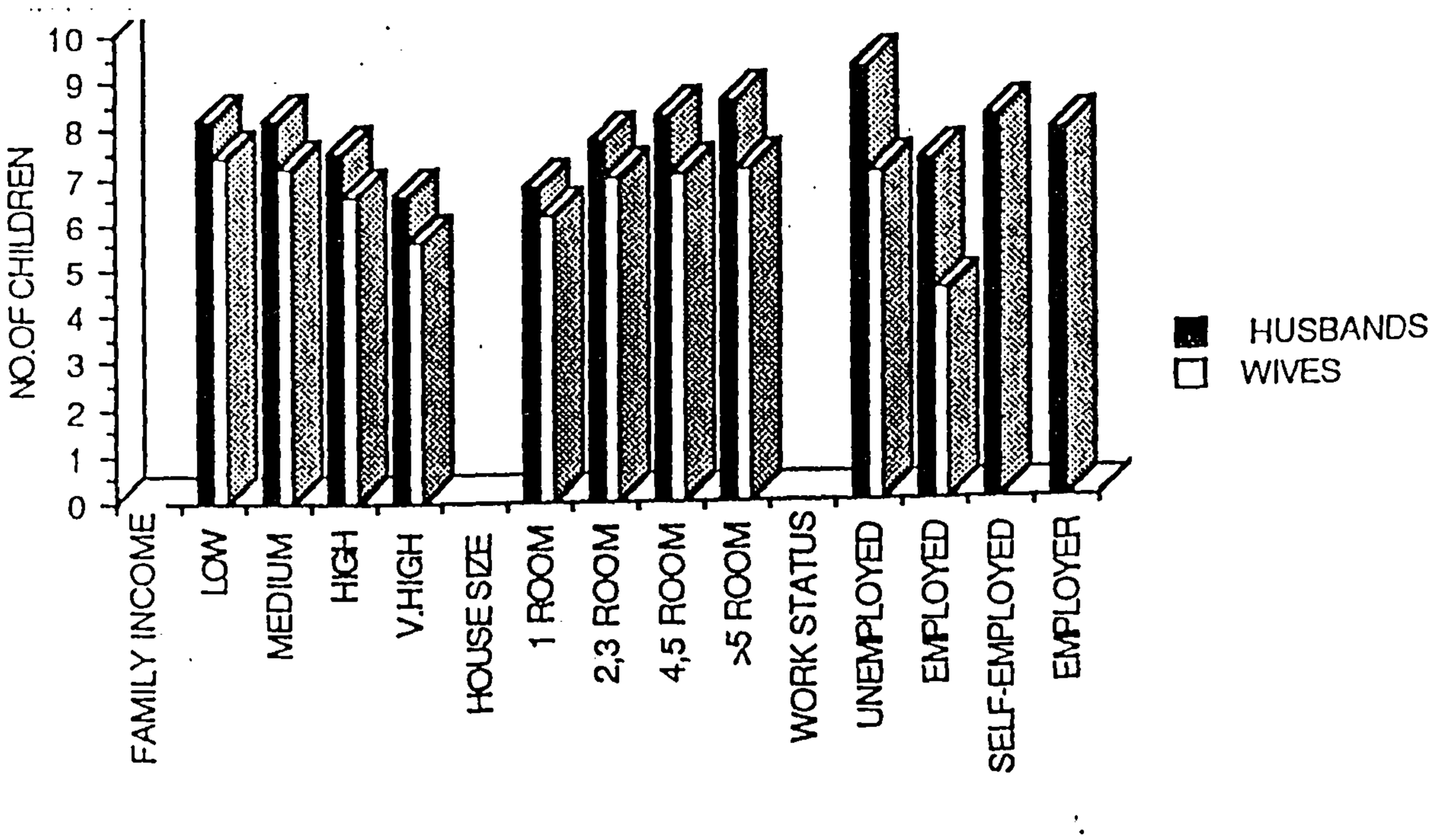
Table 9.3 suggests that there is a slight increase in the average desired number of children with increases in the size of house. This conclusion seems to contradict the previous findings that poorer families tend to desire higher numbers of children. It is, however, inevitably the case that income and house size are not perfectly correlated. It is important to keep in mind, for example, the fact that most couples living in single room accommodation are at the beginning of their married life. Equally a distorting influence is the fact that some relatively poor families have been allowed by absent relatives to use their houses in order to keep the Israelis' hands off their property. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in rural areas due to the strong social ties within extended families, and the strong threat which is felt in these areas of land and property expropriation by the Israelis.

Table 9.3 also shows that the average number of children desired by a couple is also affected by the work status of the husband and wife. The highest desired number was given by unemployed males (9.29 children). The majority of the unemployed were over 60 years of age, and most of them were from traditional cultural backgrounds. These two facts alone strongly influenced this result.

The next highest figure was for the self-employed group. This was not surprising because the majority of them were working on their own land and consequently saw high levels of fertility as being beneficial in providing

future family labour. This is entirely in line with the findings of other demographers. Schultz (1973) for example found a consistent positive association between the proportion of males in agriculture and age specific fertility rates. Also Mauldin and Berelson (1978) found a positive correlation between the proportion of males employed outside agriculture and fertility decline.

Figure 9.3: Economic variables and desired family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 9.3.

The lowest desired number of children was found amongst husbands receiving monthly salaries. Again this may be partially explained by the fact that the majority of them also had a high level of education. The table shows that there is no big difference in the average desired number of children of employers as opposed to employees.

Several studies have suggested that working women have lower fertility and preferences for a smaller number of children, compared with their non-working counterparts. This negative relation between women's work and desired fertility has been recorded in most developing countries (Goldstein, 1972; U.N., 1973; U.N., 1985). Table 9.3 confirms this position with working women wanting fewer children than non-working women (4.56 and 7.15 children in respectively). Most working women received monthly salaries so once again the effect is a complex one relating to other determining variables. It is important to mention that the majority of women in rural areas of the West Bank recorded as having no waged employment in fact share their husband's agricultural work, but they prefer to report their status as "housewives". In general, employment rates amongst Arab women are amongst the lowest in the world (Fargues, 1989).

Why should the relationship described above emerge? Woman's work reduces fertility levels in a number of ways:

1) Waged work by women changes their perceptions of the value of time and raises the opportunity cost of childbearing and rearing children (Ridker, 1976).
2) Women's work changes traditional roles and increases a woman's influence in family decision making.
3) Women's work increases household income, which leads to some changes in tastes, ambition and attitudes to having more children.

4) Women's work leads to an increase in the proportion of women making effective use of contraceptives, subsequently, increasing the degree of birth control (Mason, 1983).

5) Women's employment and childbearing may be in competition with one another, particularly if the place of work is away from home.

Some researchers suggest that increases in the rate of female participation in the labour market, will lead to substantial reductions in fertility (Davis, 1967; Fawcett, 1970). Whether this will be the case in the Arab World remains to be seen.

### 9.4.3 Demographic variables

Three purely demographic factors are usually introduced into the analysis of fertility: Marriage duration, present age of respondents and age at first marriage. This part of the chapter attempts to explain the effect of these variables on the average desired family size of both husbands and wives.

It has been observed that Islamic culture, as it is in the West Bank, encourages people to marry at an early age. Marriage is regarded as desirable by the Islamic religion (Weeks, 1988; May, 1980). Age at marriage has a significant effect on childbearing behaviour, because having children outside marriage is forbidden by Islam and is socially unacceptable. Any delay in age of marriage could therefore reduce completed family sizes (McDonald et al., 1980).

In most Arab societies, the man's age at marriage is higher than the woman's. Fargues (1989) reported an average difference between the age of spouses in Jordan, of 5.2 years. The findings of this study indicate an average gap in the West Bank of about 7 years. Reducing the gap between the age of couples may lead to a decrease in their desire for large families as a result of greater mutual understanding between them. Therefore, age at marriage is an important factor in determining family size.

Table 9.4 shows that average family size is negatively associated with age at marriage. The average desired number of children decreases slightly as age at marriage increases. For instance, the average number of children desired decreases from 8.64 among husbands who married at the age of 17-20 years to 7.12 children among those who married at the age of 29 or more; while the average number of children desired by women who married at the age of 29 or more is 6.11 children and increases to 7.71 children among women who married at an early age (less than 16).

Many factors can explain the effect of age at marriage on the average desired family size. These factors are:

1) Early marriage is often accompanied by a low level of education in both partners.
2) An early age at marriage for the husband implies that he is more likely to be influenced by his family's

opinions. Usually men who marry at an early age live in their family's home after marriage.

3) An early age at marriage for men is common practice among families with only one son. In order to maintain the family, they usually want to have many children.

4) Most early marriages are arranged between close relatives, and as mentioned in previous chapters, the existence of a blood relationship between spouses is positively associated with the number of children desired.

5) An early age at marriage for the woman puts the husband in a strong position in decision making.

6) An early age at marriage for women has a direct effect on fertility, particularly for women who do not wish to use contraceptives.

7) The political situation in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza strip) may also lead to early marriages and hence high fertility. Again it is therefore had to determine the direction of causality. The political context favours a high fertility regime and an early age at marriage may be both cause and consequence.

Regarding marriage duration, Table 9.4 shows that there is a positive relation between the average number of children desired and the length of marriage duration. The differences between partners in the relationship between average desired family size and duration of marriage shows that husband's desired family size increases more rapidly

than wives with increased duration of marriage. The average family size desired increases from 5.55 children to 9.08 children for the husbands while for wives the increase is from 5.28 to 7.85 children.

The relationships evident in Table 9.4 may reflect the view that couples, who have been married for a long time period, are more likely to be influenced by actual family size. Development processes are also more likely to have affected newly married couples rather than older ones. It is to be expected therefore that duration of marriage will be associated positively with the average desired number of children.

When standardised by age, desired family size is one of the best measures of the changing demand for children. For example Chang et al (1981) have shown that the average desired family size fell from 4.0 to 2.8 children in Taiwan between 1965 and 1980. Data from Korea shows that the average desired family size fell by about half from 5.0 to 2.5 children over the last decade (Cho, 1978). In these countries, the fall in the average desired family size was accompanied by a remarkable fall in the total fertility rate.

Table 9.4 shows that the average desired family size in the West Bank fell from 10.12 for men over 60 years of age to 5.65 among the men aged 20-29 years. A major reduction is also evident with womens age. Many other studies have shown a strong negative relationship between

the respondent's age and average number of children desired (Knodel and Prachuabmoh, 1973; Freedman and Coombs, 1974).

Table 9.4

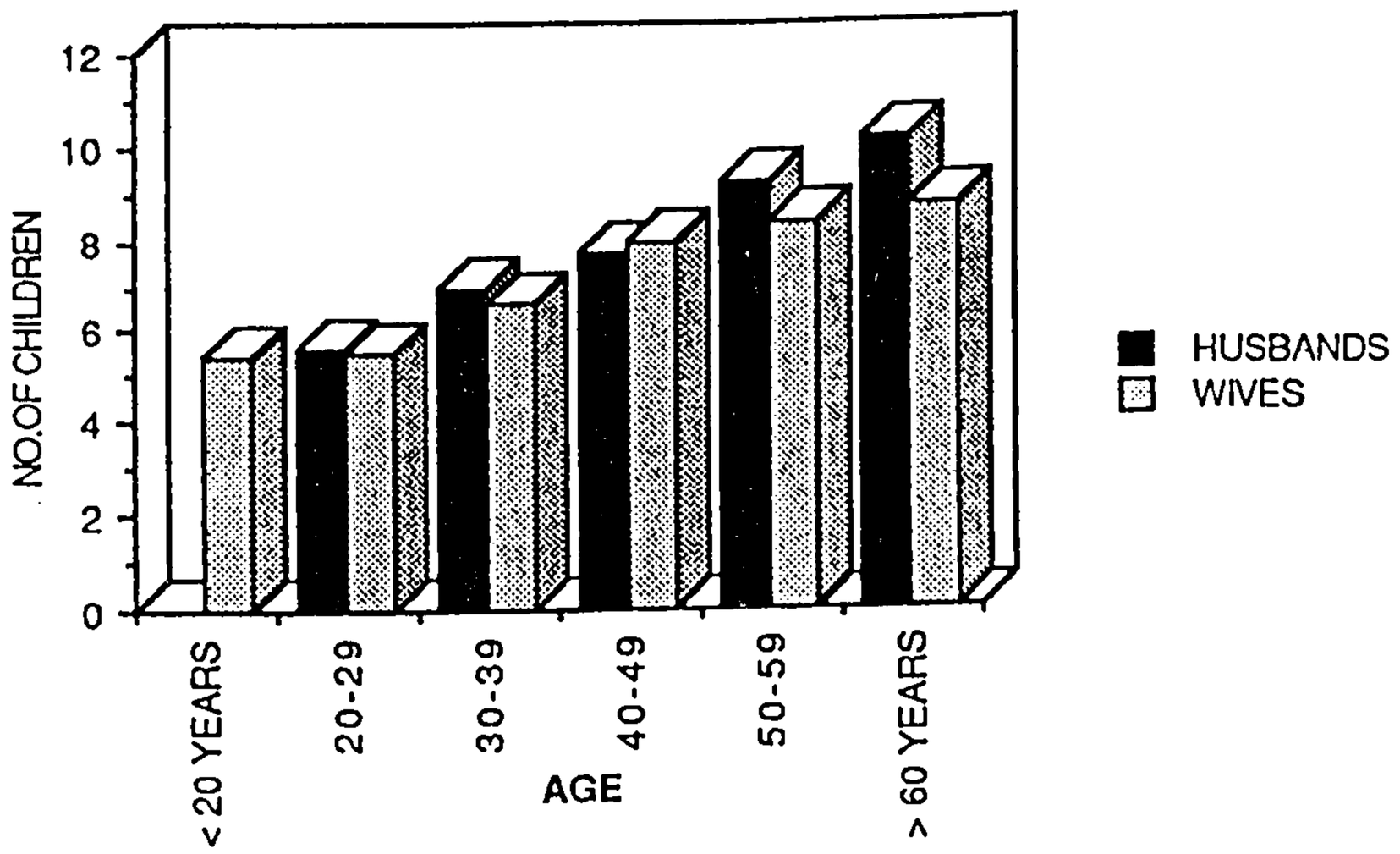
Demographic variables and average desired family size for husbands and their wives.

| Variables | Husbands Average desired number of children | Wives Average desired number of children |
|---|---|---|
| **Age at marriage** | | |
| Less than 16 years | * - | 7.77 |
| Between 17-20 years | 8.46 | 6.96 |
| Between 21-24 years | 7.95 | 6.29 |
| Between 25-28 years | 7.51 | 6.23 |
| 29 years and more | 7.12 | 6.11 |
| **Duration of marriage** | | |
| Less than 3 years | 5.55 | 5.28 |
| 3-5 years | 6.01 | 5.70 |
| 6-8 years | 6.62 | 6.23 |
| 9-11 years | 7.22 | 6.24 |
| More than 11 years | 9.08 | 7.85 |
| **Age** | | |
| Less than 20 years | * - | 5.48 |
| 20-29 years | 5.65 | 5.55 |
| 30-39 years | 6.94 | 6.61 |
| 40-49 | 7.72 | 8.00 |
| 50-59 | 9.19 | 8.39 |
| 60 years or more | 10.12 | 8.71 |

* - Less than 10 cases.
Source: Author's data, 1988.

The differences between younger and older couples desires can be attributed to the fact that older couples are generally more traditional in their outlook and hence have a stronger preference for large families than younger couples who are more responsive to "modern" attitudes.

Figure 9.4: Respondent's age and average desired family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 9.4.

The most important conclusion however concerning the relationship between age of respondents and desired number of children is that a large decrease in desired family size by the respondents age has not been accompanied by an actual decrease in family size. Most fertility estimations in the West Bank do not indicate any very significant changes in fertility levels within the last two decades.

While attitudes may have changed, translating these attitudes into practice has not occurred. There is, therefore, scope for useful research to discover why this divergence between perceptions and behaviour has arisen.

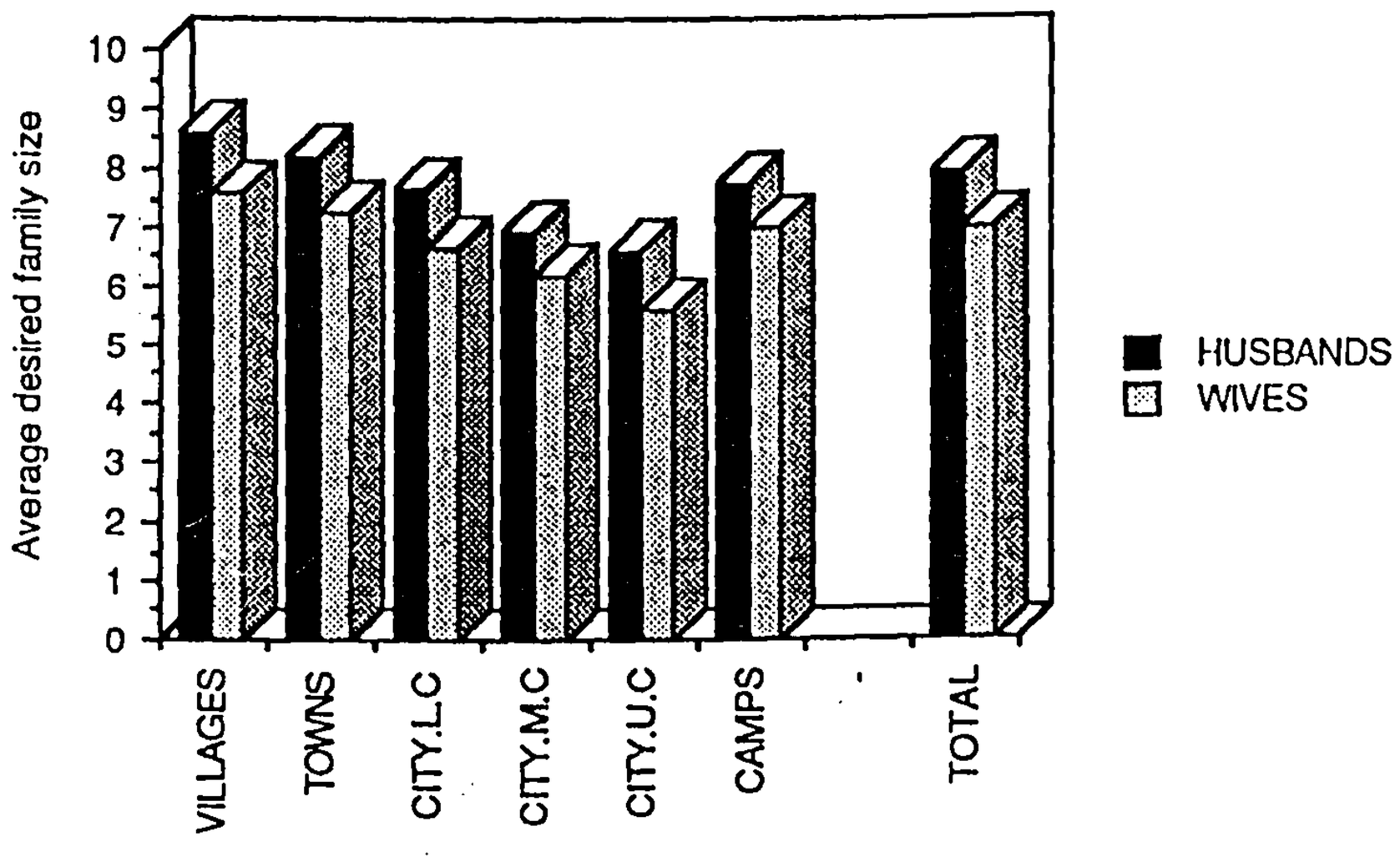
9.4.4 Geographical factors

The survey also revealed that significant differences existed between places in desired family size. This has resulted from the unevenness of the ways in which the development process has operated between one area and another. Traditional culture is inevitably more dominant in rural areas where the majority of residents work in the agricultural sector, while in urban areas development processes have had different effects on the social classes. Assessment of the costs and benefits of having children and indeed the yard sticks used to evaluate these concepts are also geographically differentiated. For instance, the cost of children in rural areas may be perceived to be less than in urban areas because child labour may be a greater benefit. In rural areas help is also provided by members of the extended family in raising children.

Freedman and Slesinger (1961) studied the attitudinal changes among rural migrants towards fertility and found that their attitudes were influenced by the attitudes of people in urban areas. It may be that through time the gap in perceptions between rural and urban areas will decrease as a result of increased spatial interaction, and the effect of the mass media in diffusing a broader societal perspective on desired family size. Table 9.5 shows as

expected, that differences exist in the desired number of children. The mean number of children desired falls from 7.6 in towns to 5.6 children for women in the city's upper class, and from 8.6 among husbands in towns to 6.6 children for husbands in the city's upper class. The differences between husbands and wives desires are obvious in all sub areas.

Figure 9.5: Desired family size by place of residence.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 9.5.

As for the refugee camps, the average desired family size for both husband and wife is higher than that of urban areas, but slightly lower than that in urban ones. One possible reason for such differences is the fact that the vast majority of refugees are immigrants from rural areas of Palestine, and as a result of the geographic location of

refugee camps being adjacent to cities, the influence of urban sub culture and life style on the attitudes of the refugees is substantial.

Regarding the urban social groups, Table 9.5 shows big differences between the city's social classes. These differences could be attributed to the wide gaps in the socio economic levels among the various classes and to the varying perceptions in couples' attitudes towards the value of children.

Table 9.5

Average number of children desired by place of residence.

| Area | Husbands average desired family size | Wives average desired family size |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 7.92 | 7.00 |
| Small villages | 8.58 | 7.61 |
| Towns | 8.17 | 7.26 |
| City, lower class | 7.68 | 6.64 |
| City, middle class | 6.94 | 6.21 |
| City, upper class | 6.62 | 5.62 |
| Refugee camps | 7.75 | 7.02 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

## 9.5 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated and analysed the most common approaches used in measuring desired family size. The highest average desired family size (7.10) was produced by using the conventional approach. The lowest average was

given by the stopping point approach (5.68 children). It is believed that the average desired family size obtained from the stopping point approach was affected by the increase in the number of women using efficient contraceptives. In societies where birth control is widely and effectively practiced the differences between the different approaches should be very small.

The results indicated that husbands in the West Bank desire on average about one child more than their wives. This may be attributed to cultural norms. West Bank women appear more eager to control births than their husbands.

Socio-cultural, economic, demographic and geographical factors have had a substantial influence on both husbands and wives perceptions of desired family size. The average desired family size steadily decreased with increases in a couples level of education, family income, level of urbanization and age at marriage. On the other hand, the average family size increased with increase in a couples age, duration of marriage and house size.

The effect of women's work on the average family size is more significant than that of their husbands. Also it was found that religion does have a significant effect on the average desired family size. For example, Christian couples prefer less children than their Muslim counterparts. However, a most interesting finding is that Christian wives prefer more children than their husbands.

# CHAPTER 10

# IDEAL FAMILY SIZE

## 10.1 Introduction

For many years, demographers have been analysing data on ideal family size (Freedman and Sharp, 1954; Whelpton et al., 1966; Westoff, 1963; Blake, 1966; Gustavus, 1973). This kind of information has proved useful for projecting trends in births in relation to other socio-economic and demographic characteristics (Freedman & Sharp, 1954).

In most developing countries, surveys have shown that the average number of children desired increases with the total number of living children (Mousa, 1987; Pullum, 1980). However, survey respondents have tended to report an ideal family which is smaller than their declared preference for their own family. Compared with developed countries, ideal family size therefore tends to be higher than peoples own actual or desired family size (Pullum, 1980).

In the West Bank survey carried out by the author, the question about ideal family size was restricted to husbands for two reasons: Firstly, husbands were considered to have the final say about the number of children the family should have. Secondly, the topic of ideal family size in Arab countries has been virtually ignored by researchers and the few studies which have been carried out relate mainly to women.

Following a brief introduction to the concept of

ideal family size, this chapter turns to giving an evaluation of the survey results, relating ideal family size to the husband's characteristics. It also explores the relationship between actual, desired and ideal family size.

## 10.2 The Concept of Ideal Family Size

Researchers and demographers should be cautious when asking respondents their opinions of actual, desired and ideal family size all within one questionnaire. By collecting data on all three measures at once respondents may default to giving the same answer for all three questions rather than considering the distinctive nature of each of the three terms.

The concept of ideal family size seeks to identify what a person or married couple consider to be a suitable number of children per family in a particular society independently from their personal situation and their perceptions of social norms (Freedman et al., 1959; Stycos, 1965).

An "ideal family size" question, therefore, neither measures the number of children that a respondent has in his or her family at a particular point in time nor the final number of children which a respondent expects will make up his or her completed family size in the future. Hence the concept of ideal family size is of vital importance in providing a distinctive picture of peoples views of the relationship between fertility behaviour and

future attitudes to childbearing (Girard and Roussel, 1982).

## 10.3 Survey Results: Ideal family size in relation to socio-economic and demographic characteristics

In the analysis which follows responses about ideal family size have been grouped into four categories: small (less than four children), moderate (four or five children), large (six to eight children) and very large (nine children and more). Table 10.1 shows the distribution of responses cross tabulated against other respondent characteristics. It shows that average ideal family size for the whole sample was 5.66 children. More than 80% of husbands defined their ideal in terms of a moderate to large family size (four to eight children). The political situation in the West Bank (with the area continuing under Israeli occupation) may play a considerable role in accounting for the high ideal family size. Responses by different sub-area's are markedly different from one another. For instance, the proportion of urban husbands who chose small families was higher than in rural areas and refugee camps. There was also greater variation in the declared ideal family size between various classes in urban areas than between the inhabitants of village, town and refugee camps.

Differences in ideal family size according to the husband's age are quite clear. Younger people tend to classify the ideal family size as being less than older generations. The average ranges between 4.56 for the

Table 10.1

Percentage distribution and average ideal family size by place of residence, husband's age, education and actual number of children.

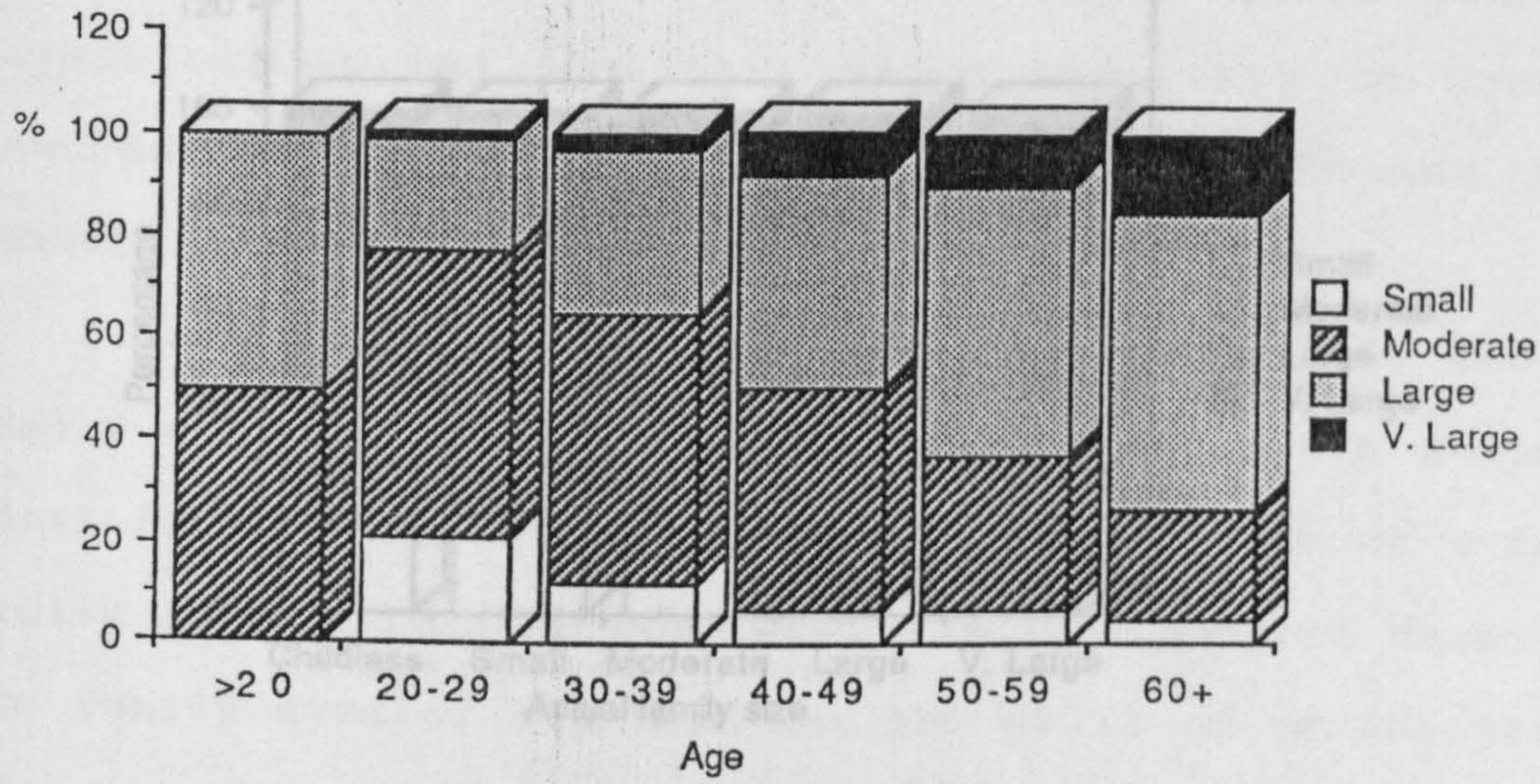
| | Ideal family size | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Small | Moderate | Large | V. Large | Mean |
| | (% of total) | | | | |
| Total population | 10.3 | 41.1 | 41.0 | 7.5 | 5.66 |
| Area | | | | | |
| Small village | 8.9 | 43.0 | 35.7 | 12.7 | 5.98 |
| Towns | 9.7 | 37.3 | 44.7 | 8.3 | 5.79 |
| City lower class | 11.0 | 36.0 | 50.0 | 3.0 | 5.45 |
| City middle class | 17.0 | 47.0 | 35.0 | 1.0 | 4.97 |
| City upper class | 17.0 | 39.0 | 41.0 | 3.0 | 5.10 |
| Refugee camps | 3.0 | 48.5 | 43.4 | 5.1 | 5.80 |
| Husband's age | | | | | |
| Less than 20 | 0.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 0.0 | 6.00 |
| 20-29 | 21.2 | 55.9 | 21.8 | 1.1 | 4.56 |
| 30-39 | 12.0 | 52.6 | 31.7 | 3.6 | 5.18 |
| 40-49 | 7.1 | 43.8 | 41.4 | 7.7 | 5.77 |
| 50-59 | 6.7 | 30.1 | 53.1 | 10.0 | 6.12 |
| 60 and over | 4.7 | 22.0 | 57.6 | 15.7 | 6.70 |
| ($chi^2$ = 148 d.f. = 12 Significant = 0.001) | | | | | |
| Husband's Education | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 4.5 | 14.6 | 61.8 | 19.1 | 7.03 |
| Lower education | 6.1 | 40.6 | 45.1 | 8.1 | 5.86 |
| Middle education | 16.6 | 52.1 | 29.4 | 1.8 | 4.90 |
| Higher education | 21.8 | 56.3 | 21.3 | 0.6 | 4.53 |
| ($chi^2$ = 171 d.f. = 9 Significant = 0.001) | | | | | |
| Actual family size | | | | | |
| Childless (0) | 18.2 | 56.6 | 21.1 | 4.0 | 4.66 |
| Small (1-3) | 19.2 | 50.6 | 27.8 | 2.4 | 4.85 |
| Moderate (4-5) | 11.8 | 51.3 | 30.8 | 6.2 | 5.36 |
| Large (6-8) | 4.4 | 30.0 | 58.9 | 6.7 | 6.11 |
| V. Large (9+) | 1.6 | 26.3 | 53.7 | 18.4 | 6.88 |
| ($chi^2$ = 177 d.f = 12 Significant = 0.001 | | | | | |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

husbands aged between 20-29 years, to 6.70 for husbands aged 60 years and over. These findings contradict work by Freedman and Sharp (1954) who found a positive relation between age and the ideal family size. Freedman and Sharp (1954) attributed this to the effect of social norms which he claimed affected the older respondents more than the younger ones. The association of ideal family size and husband's age proved statistically highly significant for the West Bank survey carried out by the author with the chi-square value being significant at 0.001 confidence level. In the same way, the survey showed that education has an influence on ideal family size. Ideal family size declines amongst those with higher levels of education. As shown in the table, the value of chi-square are higher in relation to education than to age. These findings are not surprising and corroborate the findings of other studies of the determinants of fertility behaviour (Chenery and Syrkin, 1977; Schultz, 1973; Fargues, 1989).

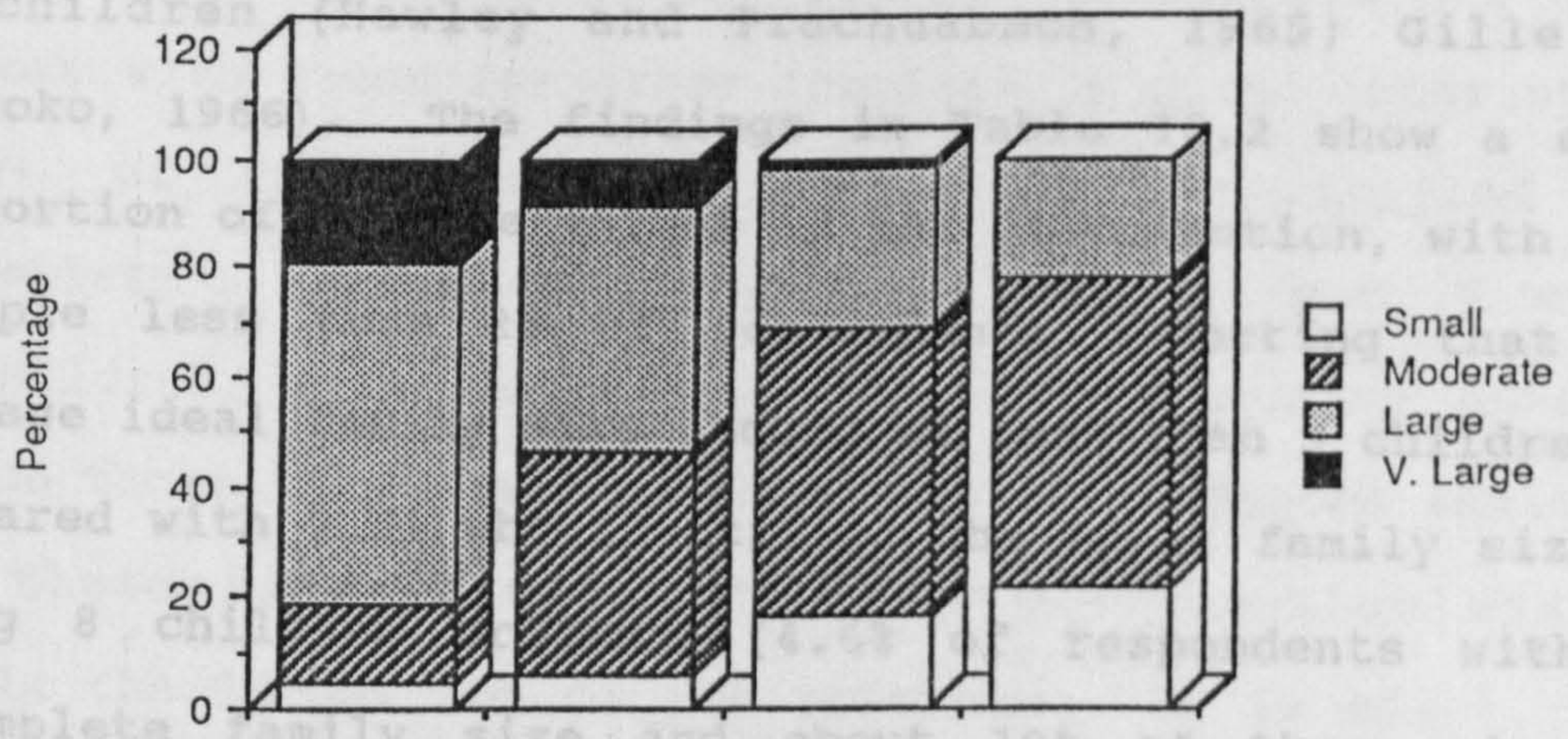
The number of children considered as ideal also increased proportionately with the number of children in the respondent's family (Table 10.1). The mean ideal family size increases gradually with increase in actual family size. Consider, for example, the difference between ideal family size among those who had no children (4.66) and those who had very large families (6.88). Once again the relationship proved statistically highly significant.

Figure 10.1: Percent distribution of ideal family size.



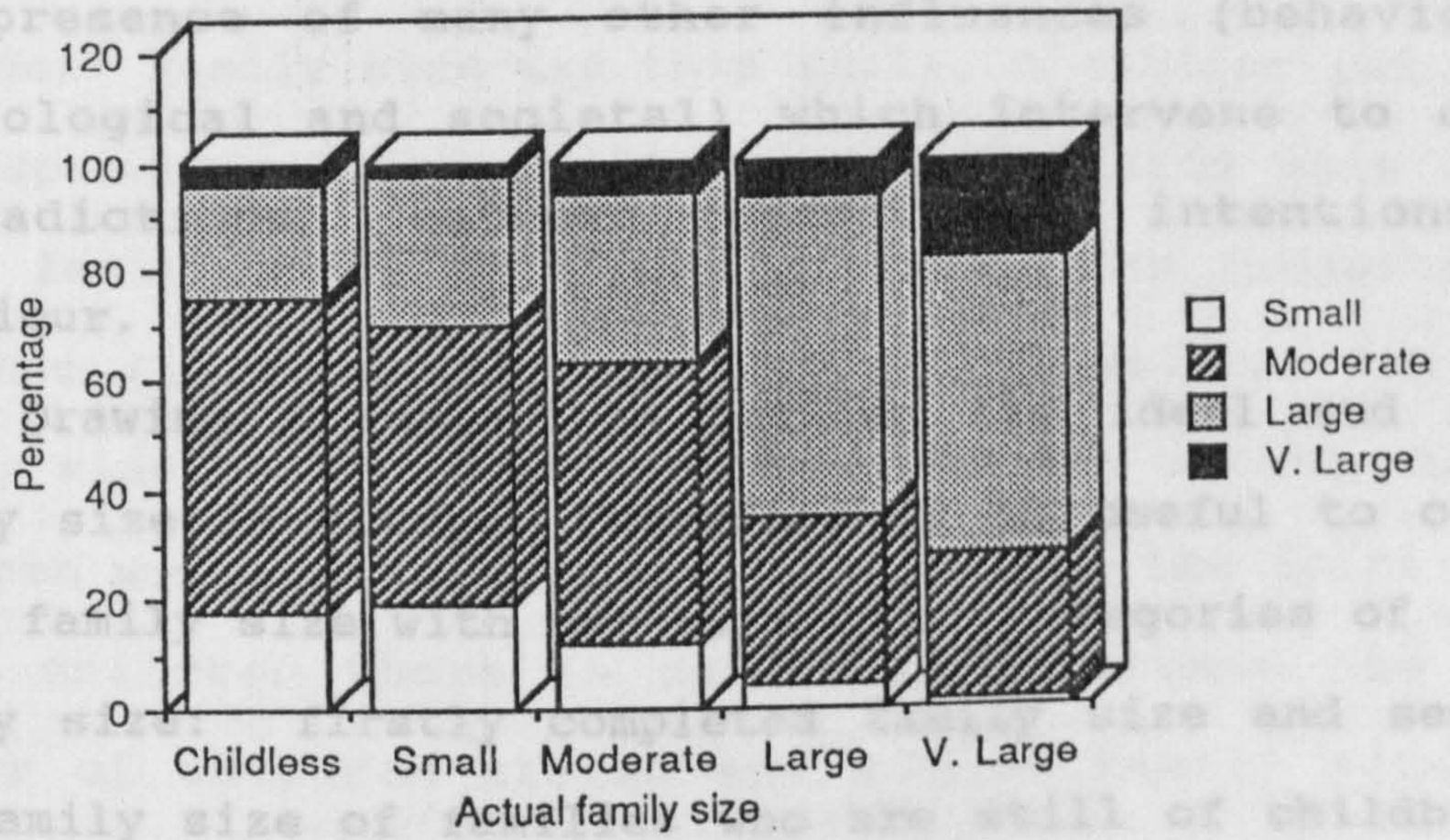

Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 10.1

Figure 10.2: Distribution of ideal family size by educational level.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 10.1

Figure 10.3: Distribution of ideal family size by No. of living children.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 10.1

## 10.4 Ideal and actual family size

Many studies have examined the relationship between peoples declared ideal family size and their actual number of children (Hawley and Prachuabmoh, 1965; Gille and Pardoko, 1966). The findings in Table 10.2 show a small proportion of extreme values in the distribution, with for example less than 2% of respondents reporting that the average ideal family size should be less than 3 children as compared with 7.5% who identified the ideal family size as being 8 children or more (4.6% of respondents with an incomplete family size and about 10% of these who had completed their families).

In the author's West Bank study, two thirds of respondents stated an ideal family size would have four, five or six children. The actual number of children found

in the households surveyed was very different, reflecting the presence of many other influences (behavioural, physiological and societal) which intervene to create contradictions between reproductive intentions and behaviour.

Drawing a comparison between the ideal and actual family size is vital. Therefore it is useful to compare ideal family size with two particular categories of actual family size: firstly completed family size and secondly the family size of families who are still of childbearing age and who want more children. Table 10.2 shows the distribution of the number of children of married couples who claimed to have achieved their completed family size, where the wife was no longer in the childbearing cohorts or where according to the husband the couple did not want additional children. A comparison of the results for this category with those for other families is quite interesting - 70% of the families which were classified as "incomplete", cited an ideal family size of four, five or six children, with responses being almost equally divided between these three values. About 60% of completed families gave these same values, but with distribution skewed towards the larger end of the spectrum. It is clear then that in incompleted families, the husband was likely to give a response which was lower than in completed families. The main reason for this may simply be that husbands in completed families are older.

About half of the husbands in "incomplete" families had less than three children, while only 2% suggested that the ideal family size was this small. A similar percentage of respondents had 3 children and identified this as the ideal family size. On the other hand, the proportion of husbands (in completed families) who classified the ideal family size as being two children and who already had two children was only 1.2% of the total. From the third to the sixth children there is convergence between the ideal number of children stated and actual family size, and indeed ideal family size becomes less than the actual size.

Table 10.2

Actual and ideal number of children (percentage distribution).

| No. of living children | Incomplete families | | Completed families | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Actual | Ideal | Actual | Ideal |
| 0 | 19.4 | - | 1.2 | - |
| 1 | 16.9 | 0.2 | 0.6 | - |
| 2 | 14.4 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| 3 | 12.7 | 11.5 | 4.8 | 6.3 |
| 4 | 12.1 | 24.6 | 7.5 | 12.9 |
| 5 | 7.3 | 24.2 | 12.1 | 21.2 |
| 6 | 5.6 | 21.3 | 14.4 | 26.7 |
| 7 | 4.8 | 7.1 | 15.0 | 13.3 |
| 8 | 2.3 | 4.8 | 10.8 | 8.3 |
| 9+ | 4.3 | 4.6 | 32.6 | 10.3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

There was a general association between the level of fertility in particular areas and the reported ideal family size. In spite of this, differences between areas in the stated average ideal family size were less than differences in actual total fertility rates. It is clear from table 10.3 that the total fertility rate exceeds the ideal family size for the sample as a whole. In the case of rural areas (small villages and towns), the ideal family size in rural areas exceeded the overall sample average with values of 5.98 and 5.79 respectively compared with an average of only 5.66. The total fertility rate in these areas also exceeded the overall average (7.5 compared with 7.1). This differential is equally clear in comparing different classes in the city. For instance, in the urban city middle class areas the total fertility rate was 5.98 and the average ideal family size was 4.97, compared with 7.1 and 5.66 respectively for the whole sample. In refugee camps the ideal family size exceeded that for the sample as a whole but the total fertility rate did not exceed the total fertility rate for the sample. This phenomenon can be explained by the political context and the socio-economic situation of the refugee camps. From the overall findings it is evident that the ideal family size is nearly 1.5 children less that the total fertility rate. In towns, however, the total fertility rate exceeds the ideal family size by two children.

Table 10.3

Total fertility rate and the mean ideal number of children in different sub-areas.

| Area | Total fertility rate (T.F.R.) | Ave. of ideal family size | Col 2- Col 1 | Ratio % Col. 2/ Col. 1 | Rank order Col 1 | Rank order Col 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Col. 1 | Col. 2 | Col. 3 | Col. 4 | | |
| Total population | 7.180 | 5.66 | -1.440 | 79.70 | - | - |
| Small villages | 7.525 | 5.98 | -1.545 | 79.50 | 2 | 1 |
| Towns | 7.515 | 5.79 | -2.025 | 74.10 | 1 | 3 |
| City lower class | 6.525 | 5.45 | -1.075 | 83.52 | 3 | 4 |
| City middle class | 5.980 | 4.97 | -1.010 | 83.11 | 5 | 6 |
| City upper class | 5.035 | 5.10 | +0.065 | 101.29 | 6 | 5 |
| Refugee camps | 6.500 | 5.80 | -0.700 | 89.23 | 4 | 3 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

The ranking of the six sub-areas by total fertility rate is convergent parallel with the ranking on ideal family size. One should not attach too much meaning to minor differences. The average figures for the ideal family size for the six sub-areas lay within the range of 4.97 to 5.98, while the total T.F.R. ranges from 5.0 children in the city upper class areas to 7.8 children in towns. The table also shows that the average ideal family size is less than the total fertility rate for all areas except the city upper classes.

## 10.5 Ideal and desired family size

No-one should assume that ideal family size is equivalent to desired family size (Stycos, 1965). It is important to distinguish between "generalised" ideal family size which refers to the number of children the respondent considers ideal for a family in his society, and "personal" family size preferences which refer to the number of living children the respondent would like to have in his or her own family. In those studies which have asked questions on both the general and personal perceptions of ideal family size (Whelpton et al., 1966; Gustavus and Nam, 1970) distinctive differences in both conceptual and empirical terms have been detected. Pullum (1980) noted that in Europe general views of ideal family size tended to be higher than personal perceptions of desired family size. By contrast Ryder and Westoff (1969) found no significant differences amongst women in the survey in the United States. It is to be expected that in most developing countries general views of ideal family size or of desired number of children would produce results indicating a lower figure than for personal perceptions as a result of the influence of cultural norms on the attitudes of husbands personal desires. On the contrary, some studies carried out in developed countries indicate the ideal family size to be higher than the desired as a result of low fertility levels (Ryder and Westoff, 1969). Sometimes respondents repeated the number of children which they have or the number of

children they want or expect as an ideal number of children.

Differences between general and personal views may reflect the discrepancy between actual behaviour and future intentions. If behaviour does not correspond with intentions and aspirations, then there is clearly scope for policy action to reduce the gap and in the long run, therefore, to reduce fertility levels.

While conducting his field work the researcher noticed that the major obstacles which made many families deviate from having what they perceived to be the ideal family size were:

(a) The unstable political situation in the occupied territories

(b) This in turn raised fears about the life expectancy of children in the area.

(c) In addition people felt under pressure to conform to social norms with regard to family size.

The pressure was seen to be particularly great relative to the expectations of the husband's family and close relatives. In the West Bank survey carried out by the author, some people thought that their religion forbade the use of modern contraceptives.

Table 10.4 summarises the survey results for the different measures of family size as tabulated for the total population and for each area. It is clear from the table that the average ideal family size for society as a whole was lower than the desired size for people's own

families. The total fertility rate seems to be closest to the average desired size reported by wives. The size of completed family was in nearly all areas higher than both the T.F.R. measure and wives desired family size.

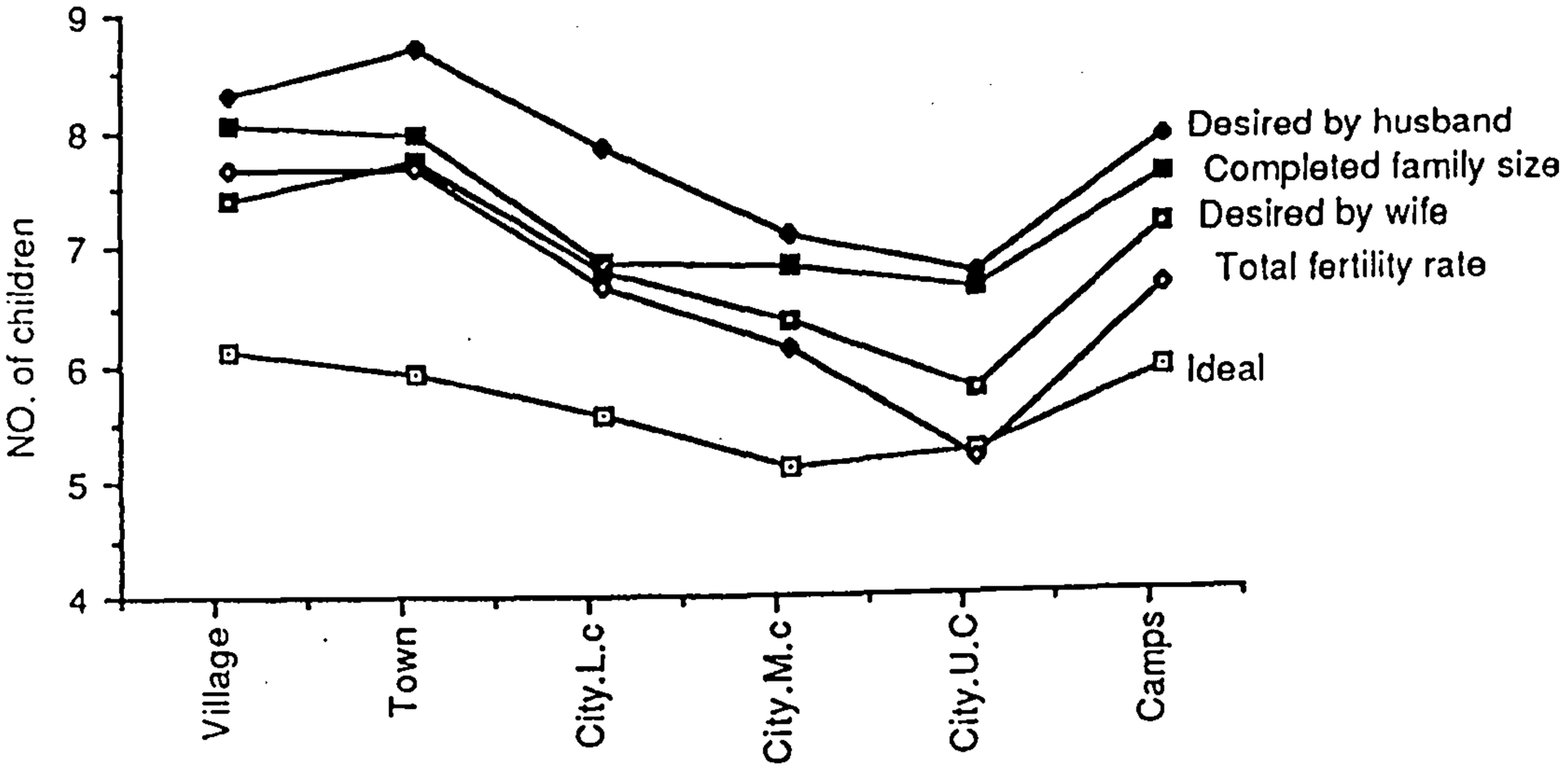
Table 10.4

Different measures of family size for sub-areas.

| Area | Mean ideal family size (society in general) | Mean desired family size Husbands (own families) | Mean desired family size Wives | Total fertility rate (TFR) | Average complete family size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Small village | 5.98 | 8.17 | 7.26 | 7.525 | 7.91 |
| Towns | 5.79 | 8.58 | 7.61 | 7.515 | 7.81 |
| City lower class | 5.45 | 7.68 | 6.64 | 6.525 | 6.71 |
| City middle class | 4.97 | 6.94 | 6.21 | 5.980 | 6.69 |
| City upper class | 5.10 | 6.62 | 5.62 | 5.035 | 6.47 |
| Refugee camps | 5.80 | 7.75 | 7.02 | 6.500 | 7.44 |
| Total Population | 5.66 | 7.92 | 7.00 | 7.180 | 7.22 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Figure 10.4: Average family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 10.4

## 10.6 Conclusion

One of the main advantages of ideal family size is the measurement of attitudes towards future family size in the long run. In addition, it helps provide useful clues about the nature of family size norms.

It can be concluded from the material presented that the average ideal family size for the West Bank is 5.66 children, lower than the average desired family size (for both husbands and wives) and the total fertility rate. The desired family size seems to be closer to the total fertility rate. It is found that urbanization and husbands educational level have a negative association with the average ideal family size, whilst age and actual number of living children are positively associated with mean ideal family size.

The findings also reveal significant differences in the proportion of husbands who reported the ideal family size to be the same as their own family size (i.e. number of children). For example, in incomplete families, only 11% of husbands have 7 children and more, while 16.5% of total husbands chose the ideal family size to be 6 or greater. Moreover, in complete families, 58% of husbands have 7 children or more, whilst nearly 32% indicated that the ideal family size should be more than 6 children.

The mean ideal family size in the West Bank (5.66) seems to be higher than that in some developing countries. For instance, in Egypt the ideal family size ranges between 3 and 4 children (Gadalla, 1978), in Nigeria the range is between 3-7 children (Olusanga, 1971), while in Puerto Rico the range is between 2-4 children (Hill et al., 1959). Comparing these results, one can argue that one of several main reasons for the seemingly high average ideal family size in the West Bank is the political situation.

# CHAPTER 11

# HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONS AND REPRODUCTIVE GOALS

## 11.1 Introduction

Most fertility studies carried out throughout the world have been focussed on interviews with married women, particularly those who are still in the reproductive cohorts. Women seem to be the logical respondents for such surveys and the most reliable source of such information. This has been the case even although there has been long standing recognition of the importance of the husband's opinion and attitudes towards fertility trends, levels and attitudes. This is especially important in most Arab and Islamic societies.

If there have been few attempts to research husband's views, then there have been even fewer studies which have sought to research the combined perspectives both of husbands and wives. Hill et al. (1959), Yaukey et al. (1965) and Mitchell (1972) were unusual in addressing questions about family size attitudes and family planning to both husbands and their wives. Most concentrated on the aggregate differences between couples responses, rather than linking the views of the marital partners or investigating the degree of agreement between couples and the effect of this on family size.

This chapter analyses the extent of communication between marriage partners and considers factors affecting the communication process. It also assesses the

relationship between the similarity of a couple's profile characteristics and the similarity of their responses on matters relating to desired family size and child gender preferences. The chapter also seeks to shed light on the factors favouring agreement or disagreement between couples in their decisions to have additional children. The chapter hopes to contribute to the overall thrust of the thesis by showing that the nature of a couple's relationship may influence fertility decision making.

11.2 Couples' relations and decision making

Having children may biologically require two people, but it does not necessarily involve equal participation by the two marriage partners in fertility decision making with reference to factors such as desired family size or contraceptive use. In order to investigate these issues the researcher's questionnaire sought to measure the extent of communication between the husband and wife. Data on this was elicited from seven questions addressed to wives. These were phrased as follows:

1) Who decides the desired family size (number of children) in your household?
2) Have you discussed with your husband the number of children you want and the issue of child spacing?
3) If you want to use, or you are already using contraceptives, what is the opinion of your husband on this?
4) Does your husband want to have the same number/more or

fewer children that yourself?

5) If you are currently using or have previously used contraceptives, who made the decision to use contraceptives?

6) If you have used contraceptives, did you face any social problems?

7) If you wish to use contraceptives in the future, do you expect your husband to disagree?

The answers to these questions are summarised and labelled as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1. | - Couples themselves | = | 1 |
| | Others | = | 0 |
| Q2. | - Yes, "sometimes" | = | 1 |
| | Yes, "always" | = | 2 |
| | Not at all | = | 0 |
| Q3. | - "Agree" | = | 1 |
| | "Disagree" | = | 0 |
| Q4. | - Same number | = | 1 |
| | Less or more | = | 0 |
| Q5. | - Couples themselves | = | 1 |
| | Others | = | 0 |
| Q6. | - Yes | = | 0 |
| | No | = | 1 |
| Q7. | - Yes | = | 0 |
| | No | = | 1 |

The highest possible score which a household could achieve for the seven questions was eight points. This was

taken as an index of communication between the spouses. The index can be interpreted as follows:

1) The minimum values of the index is "0". This identifies couples who do not communicate or who disagree on most matters concerning family planning.
2) An index value of "1 or 2" was taken to define couples with a low level of communication.
3) Index values of "3 or 4" were classified as moderate levels of communication.
4) Values of "5 to 8" identify households where there is a high level of communication and agreement on fertility behaviour.

However, despite its advantages in permitting some discussion of the widely sensitive issue of contraceptives, the index has also got clear limitations. For example, the questions were only directed to wives.

As can be seen from table 11.1, in no case was there absolutely no communication. Most couples (58.3%) had moderate levels of communication on fertility behaviour, while 17.2% appeared to have high levels of communication.

The demographic, geographic and socio-economic characteristics of the different groups are shown in Table 11.1. The proportion with good communication levels ranged from 10% in the city lower class up to about 20% in small villages. One explanation of the high proportions found in small villages is that the majority of these couples spend most of their time working together in the agricultural sector, thus allowing them the opportunity to

discuss all aspects of their future life including matters like family size and the future of their children. It is important to keep in mind that sometimes a high degree of

Table 11.1

Percentage distribution of women in different communication groups according to area, age, education and family income.

| | LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | Moderate | High | Total% | No. of respondents |
| TOTAL | 25.7 | 58.3 | 16.0 | 100 | 999 |
| AREA | | | | | |
| Small villages | 28.4 | 51.3 | 20.3 | 100 | 300 |
| Towns | 28.7 | 59 | 12.3 | 100 | 300 |
| City, lower class | 26.0 | 64.0 | 10.0 | 100 | 100 |
| City, middle class | 7.0 | 77.0 | 16.0 | 100 | 100 |
| City, upper class | 18.0 | 63.0 | 19.0 | 100 | 100 |
| Refugee camps | 35.4 | 47.5 | 17.1 | 100 | 99 |
| WOMEN'S AGE | | | | | |
| Less than 20 | 14.3 | 59.5 | 26.2 | 100 | 42 |
| 20-29 | 8.9 | 67.7 | 23.4 | 100 | 291 |
| 30-39 | 15.0 | 65.4 | 19.6 | 100 | 214 |
| 40-49 | 32.3 | 55.0 | 12.7 | 100 | 220 |
| 50-59 | 47.1 | 47.7 | 5.2 | 100 | 153 |
| Over 60 | 63.3 | 32.9 | 3.8 | 100 | 79 |
| WOMEN'S EDUCATION | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 49.0 | 43.3 | 7.7 | 100 | 326 |
| Low education | 19.6 | 64.9 | 15.5 | 100 | 419 |
| Ave. education | 6.6 | 68.9 | 24.5 | 100 | 151 |
| High education | 4.9 | 63.1 | 32.0 | 100 | 103 |
| FAMILY INCOME | | | | | |
| Less than 100 J.D.* | 32.4 | 59.6 | 8.0 | 100 | 213 |
| Between 100-199 J.D. | 25.6 | 57.6 | 16.8 | 100 | 512 |
| More than 200 J.D. | 20.8 | 58.4 | 20.8 | 100 | 274 |

*J.D. = Jordanian dinar at the time of the survey was worth £1.64 sterling.
Source: Author's data, 1988.

communication does not lead to agreement between husband and wife on family size (Bulatao and Lee, 1983).

The distribution of responses by age shows that communication appeared to be less good among older couples. This is not a temporal trend, but instead reflects differences between the generations. For example, the proportion of women in the "high communication" group decreased from 26.2% among young women aged less than 20 years to 3.8% among women over 60 years of age.

Education is a factor which has generally been recognised as facilitating discussion of family planning between marriage partners (Campbell and Berelson, 1971). Thus, it is not surprising to find in table 11.1 that education is positively associated with levels of communication on these issues. Taking the column recording high levels of communication, the proportion of women gradually increased from 7.7% amongst illiterate women to 32.0% among women with higher education. Womens' education therefore helps in supporting their position, and encouraging them to participate in household decisions. Husbands become more receptive to sharing decision making with their wives if their wives are well educated. Khalifa (1976) found the same result in his study of rural Egypt, with wives' level of education being influential in affecting levels of communication between marriage partners.

It could also be inferred from table 11.1 that greater communication was associated positively with higher

incomes. A report by ESCAP (1974) found that couples with higher incomes tended to have more discussion about family planning than lower income couples. This may be because couples with lower incomes are more motivated to have children in the hope of raising their living standards. Family income may indicate the same direction of influence as age and education but the strength of the relationship according to Table 11.1 would seem to be less. It is important to keep in mind that the income levels may not only effect the level of communication directly but also indirectly. For example women with a high level of income usually also have more education, more opportunities to work, are less dependent on their husbands and are less traditional.

## 11.3 The consistency of couples characteristics

It is generally suggested by Bahr (1972) and Rosen and Simmons (1971) that where marriage partners are from a similar background and have similar characteristics, this reduces conflict and disagreements. This section will focus upon the similarity and the differences in the personal characteristics of married couples and how this can affect the decision making process regarding family planning. The characteristics examined are age, age at marriage and education.

When the gap between the ages of the husband and wife is small, it enhances the feeling of equality between partners in the marital process and thus, increases the

level of communication between spouses in connection with the use of contraceptive methods. In traditional societies like the West Bank, men prefer to get married to younger women. One of the most important reasons underpinning this may be the desire to keep power and authority in their hands.

Table 11.2 shows the distribution of spouses ages by area. The mean age of husbands was around 45 years with only slight differences between areas. By contrast the mean age for all wives was around 38 years. It is worth noting the remarkably high ages recorded. This may be due in part to the exodus from the West Bank of many young couples, which has affected the population structure in general. Husbands were therefore generally older than their wives (on average by about 7 years). The gap in urban areas was greater than in rural areas, which might be explained by the dominance of the extended family system in rural areas, allowing intermarriage between close relatives and encouraging earlier ages of marriage for men.

On the other hand, table 11.3 represents the percentage distribution of age differences between the couples. It is clear from the table that there was a large gap (more than 9 years) in about one third of cases compared with a gap of less than 3 years in only 23% of cases. The high differential in ages stems, of course, from social norms about differences in the expected age of men and women at marriage. The average age at marriage of husbands was about 25.6 years and for wives 19 years.

Table 11.2

Estimated mean age of husbands and wives and the mean age difference by different sub-areas.

| | Mean age of husbands | Mean age of wives | Mean age difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 45.07 | 38.21 | 6.86 |
| Small villages | 43.97 | 38.00 | 5.97 |
| Towns | 47.70 | 41.34 | 6.36 |
| City, lower class | 46.17 | 36.29 | 9.88 |
| City, middle class | 43.58 | 35.14 | 8.44 |
| City, upper class | 44.68 | 37.79 | 6.89 |
| Refugee camps | 41.24 | 34.77 | 6.43 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Table 11.3

Percentage distribution according to the age differences between couples.

| AGE DIFFERENCES | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|
| Less than 3 years | 22.7 |
| Between 3-6 years | 25.6 |
| Between 6-9 years | 20.2 |
| More than 9 years | 31.4 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

Differentials in educational attainment between husbands and wives also affect the likelihood of a wife participating in fertility decision making. Table 11.4 shows the percentage distribution of husbands and wives by their level of education. It can be seen that about 78.3% of husbands who had no schooling had married wives who had no education. 72% of wives with higher education were married to husbands with the same level of education. The remainder were married to husbands with lower level of education. On the other hand around 43% of men who reached higher educational level were married to women with the same level of education, but with a higher proportion married to women with poor qualifications. There is, therefore, asymmetry in the relationships indicated by the table, with women often being the better educated partners in a marriage.

It is possible to conclude from this table that highly educated women are more attractive to men with the same level of education. The data confirms the observation stated earlier that more educated women may have more say in marital decisions. On the other hand more educated men do not necessarily marry women with similar levels of education. The main reason behind these differences is attributed to the fact that men on balance prefer to marry women that make obedient wives. In West Bank culture, the man's role therefore remains dominant.

Table 11.4

Percentage distribution of husbands and wives responses by their level of education.

| HUSBANDS | | WIVES Illit-erate | Low education | Middle education | High education | Total number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Illiterate | R | 78.3 | 21.0 | - | 0.6 | 157 |
| | C | 37.7 | 7.9 | - | 1.0 | |
| Low education | R | 36.6 | 50.3 | 11.1 | 2.0 | 505 |
| | C | 56.7 | 60.6 | 37.1 | 9.7 | |
| Middle education | R | 7.4 | 51.5 | 30.1 | 11.0 | 163 |
| | C | 3.7 | 20.0 | 32.5 | 17.5 | |
| High education | R | 3.4 | 27.6 | 26.4 | 42.5 | 174 |
| | C | 1.8 | 11.5 | 30.5 | 71.8 | |
| Total No. | | 326 | 419 | 151 | 103 | 999 |

R: Row percentage
C: Column percentage

Source: Author's data, 1988.

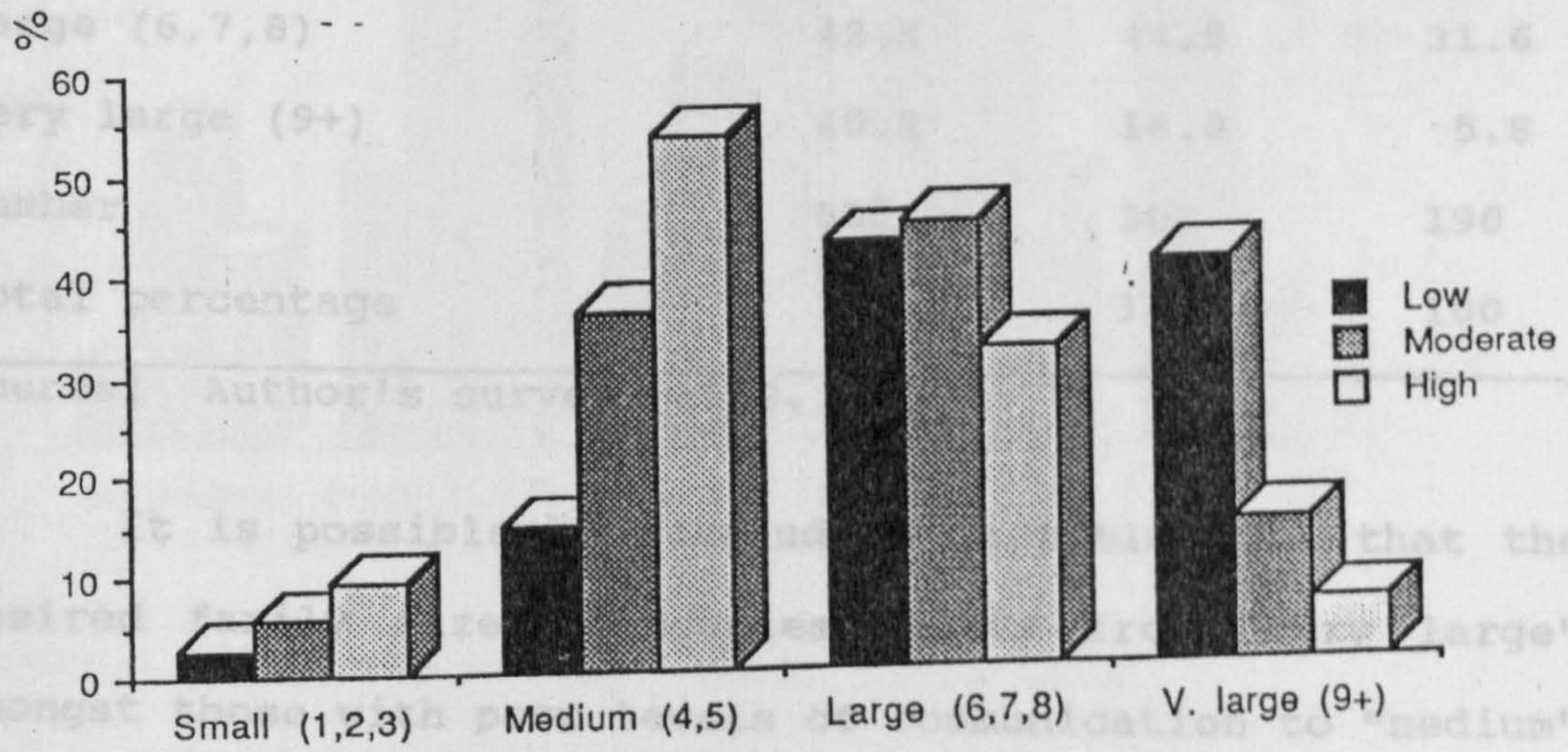
## 11.4 Communication and fertility attitudes

Communication between couples often leads to mutually agreeable decisions with regard to fertility because family preference and family planning requires the involvement of both husband and wife in the decision making process through open channels of communication. It is therefore to be expected that couples with a high level of communication will have more ability to conform their reproductive behaviour to attitudes and desires (Figa-Talamance et al.,

1974; Keller, 1973). Comparison of the actual and desired number of children can be taken to be a reasonable test of the effectiveness of communication. The question that this leads to in the West Bank context, is the extent to which enhanced communication between marriage partners offsets other forces following male dominance in decision making.

Table 11.5 shows the relationship which emerged from the author's survey between the different communication groups and average desired family size. It is noted from the table that more than half of West Bank couples fall within the low communication group as compared with less than 20% of couples who have higher communication levels. This result may reveal that traditional culture which was characterised by male dominance and the big influence of the extended family system may still operate in a strong manner in the West Bank in years to come.

Figure 11.1: Communication groups and desired family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 11.5

As table 11.5 shows, a high proportion of the couples in the group with poor communications (83%) desired large or very large families, while only a small percentage (2.6%) desired small families. On the other hand, about 80% of couples in the group with moderate communication desired moderate to large familes. A similar proportion of couples in the group with good communication levels desired a moderate and large family. But more than half of these couples desired medium sized families compared with only 35.9% of those in the moderate communication group.

Table 11.5

Percentage distribution of women in different communication groups according to desired family size.

| DESIRED FAMILY SIZE | COMMUNICATION LEVELS Low | Moderate | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small (1,2,3) | 2.6 | 5.6 | 9.5 |
| Medium (4,5) | 14.6 | 35.9 | 53.2 |
| Large (6,7,8) | 42.4 | 44.5 | 31.6 |
| Very large (9+) | 40.4 | 14.0 | 5.8 |
| Number | 508 | 301 | 190 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 |

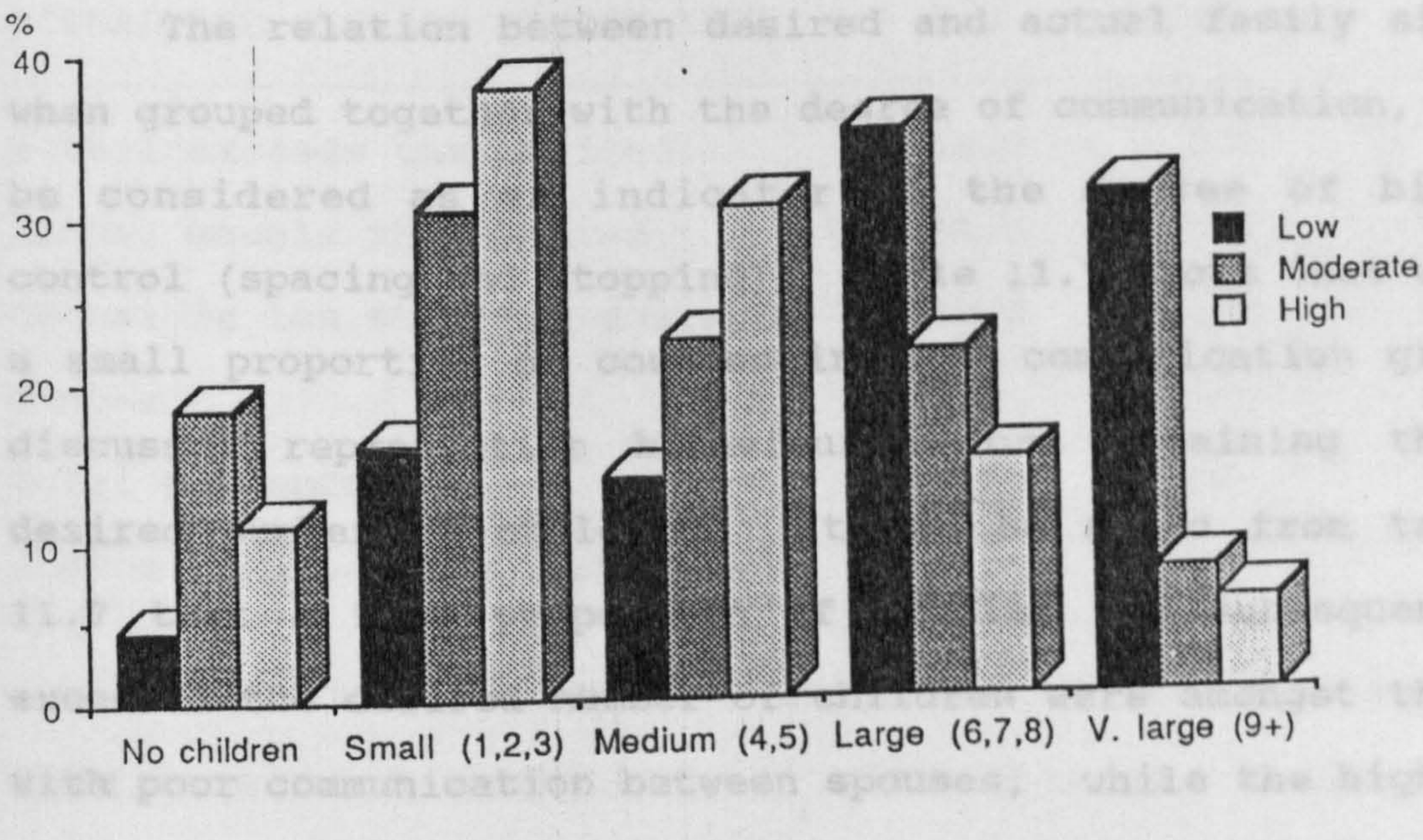
Source: Author's survey, 1988.

It is possible to conclude from table 11.5 that the desired family size of couples shifts from "very large" amongst those with poor levels of communication to "medium" amongst those with good levels of communication. It is evident that communication between spouses about

reproductive behaviour has some influence in affecting desired family size.

To examine the effect of communication on actual reproductive behaviour, table 11.6 shows the relationship between actual family size and couples communication levels. It can be noted from the table that a high proportion of couples (68%) with good communications had small or moderate families, compared with 30% of couples in the poor communication group. It can be concluded from table 11.6 that actual family size is negatively associated with couples communication levels.

Figure 11.2: Communication groups and actual family size.




Source: Author's survey, 1988, Table 11.6

Table 11.6

Percentage distribution of women in different communication groups according to their actual family size.

| ACTUAL FAMILY SIZE | COMMUNICATION LEVELS Low | Moderate | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Without children | 4.5 | 18.3 | 11.1 |
| Small (1,2,3) | 15.9 | 30.5 | 37.9 |
| Medium (4,5) | 13.8 | 22.3 | 30.5 |
| Large (6,7,8) | 35.0 | 21.3 | 14.7 |
| Very large (9+) | 30.8 | 7.6 | 5.8 |
| Number | 508 | 301 | 190 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

The relation between desired and actual family size, when grouped together with the degree of communication, may be considered as an indicator of the degree of birth control (spacing and stopping). Table 11.7 shows that only a small proportion of couples in each communication group discussed reproductive behaviour before attaining their desired number of children. It can be noted from table 11.7 that a high proportion of couples who subsequently exceeded the desired number of children were amongst those with poor communication between spouses, while the highest proportion of women who had not yet achieved their desired family size was found among those with moderate or good communication levels. It is evident that more discussion between couples with regard to future fertility behaviour

may reduce the proportion of couples who exceed their desired family size.

The influence of communication is more evident in issues relating to couples use of contraceptives or intentions to use such methods. As mentioned earlier, women are more favourably disposed towards the use of contraceptives than their husbands. It is therefore to be expected that the nature of communication levels will have a significant influence on women who use or are likely to use contraceptives in the future.

Table 11.7

Relationship between desired and actual family size according to communication groups.

| ACTUAL AND DESIRED FAMILY SIZE | COMMUNICATION LEVELS Low | Moderate | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Actual exceeds the desired | 15.7 | 6.0 | 7.4 |
| Actual equals the desired | 42.1 | 32.6 | 36.8 |
| Actual is les than the desired | 42.1 | 61.5 | 55.8 |
| Number | 508 | 301 | 190 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 11.8 shows that about 80% of women enjoying good levels of communication with their husbands used modern contraceptives as compared with about 15% of women in the poorer communication group. Although the relation is not necessarily a causal one, this means that the number of women using contraceptives increased with an increase in

the level of communication between spouses. Mitchell (1972) pointed out that family planning tends to be a family decision rather than an individual decision and found a positive relationship between communication levels and contraceptive use in Hong Kong.

Table 11.8

Percentage distribution of women in different communication groups by contraceptive use.

| | COMMUNICATION LEVELS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | Moderate | High |
| Contraceptive users | 15.2 | 45.5 | 79.5 |
| Non users of contraceptives | 84.8 | 54.5 | 20.5 |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 11.9 examines the influence of communication levels on womens' attitudes towards the use of modern contraceptives in the future. It can be noted from the table that all women with a high level of communication would be willing to use contraceptives in the future as compared with 73.8% and 13.2% of women in the moderate and low level communication groups, respectively.

Table 11.9

Percentage distribution of women in different communication groups by their attitudes towards contraceptives.

| ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONTRACEPTIVES | COMMUNICATION LEVELS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Low | Moderate | High |
| In favour | 13.2 | 73.8 | 100 |
| Not in favour | 86.8 | 26.2 | - |
| Total percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 11.5 Husbands and wives similarity of responses

There are a number of ways of measuring agreement between husbands and wives. The simplest approach is to measure agreement in terms of the similarity of responses to questions in terms of the statistical values. Where husbands as well as wives have been interviewed, this approach allows measurement of the proportion of identical responses from couples. It might be expected that little consistency between couples responses would occur on questions about fertility attitudes as a result of the cultural factors discussed earlier in this thesis. But in practice, the strength of the marital ties and of a couples responsibility towards their children sometimes did encourage good communication between them and strengthened female decision making. Consequently, some couples' gave similar responses.

This section deals with the level of agreement between marriage partners in relation to their reproductive goals and preferences. Table 11.10 for example cross tabulates husbands and wives responses towards the number and gender of children preferred. This table shows that the proportion of husbands who prefer large and very large families is higher than their wives. It is clear that husbands responses were therefore more widely spread. This reflects the higher value of the standard deviation for this distribution. Table 11.10 also shows that wives are less likely than their husbands to

want to have more boys than girls. For example, the proportion of wives who prefer an equal number of boys and girls is 21.3%, higher than the proportion of husbands (9.6%).

Table 11.10

Distribution of couples' responses towards number and gender of children preferred.

| RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION Male Gender Preference Scale* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female Preference | None | Mild | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong | N |
| Husbands | 1.0 | 9.6 | 20.9 | 36.4 | 18.0 | 14.0 | 999 |
| Wives | 0.8 | 21.3 | 22.0 | 31.2 | 14.5 | 10.1 | 999 |
| Identical responses | 0.3 | 11.6 | 23.1 | 41.8 | 11.3 | 11.9 | 311 |

| | Desired Family Size Scale | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Small (1,2,3) | Moderate (4,5) | Large (6,7,8) | Very Large (9+) | N |
| Husbands | 4.4 | 21.8 | 31.6 | 40.1 | 999 |
| Wives | 4.8 | 28.3 | 41.0 | 25.8 | 999 |
| Identical responses | 5.7 | 26.4 | 33.1 | 34.8 | 477 |

* Female = boys < girls
None = boys = girls by 0 up to 1
Mild = boys > girls by 1
Moderate = boys > girls by 2,3
Strong = boys > girls by 4,5
Very strong = boys > girls by more than 5

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Table 11.10 measures the identical responses towards the number and gender of children preferred between husbands and wives. It is noted from the table that the proportion of couples who give identical responses towards

family size is 47.7%, higher than the proportion of identical responses towards gender of children (31.1%). It is possible to conclude from table 11.10 that a couple's agreement about the number and gender of their children is affected dominantly by cultural norms. A secondary influence is the tendency for couples to agree with each other on the basis of rationalisation of their actions after the event and satisfaction with their actual family size.

## 11.6 Identical responses and couples characteristics

What determines the pattern of joint decision making? If there are systematic influences, such as age and education, which favour husbands and wives holding similar perspectives on family planning, then these in turn may result in spatial patterns of attitudes and behaviour.

Table 11.11 shows that the proportion of couples giving identical responses range from 43.3% in small villages to 58.0% in city upper class areas. It is clear from the table that there is an association between identical responses and urbanisation level. Identical responses are higher in urban areas (52.3%) than in rural areas (44.8%). The same is true of attitudes to family size. This difference may be attributed to the fact that women in urban areas participate in family decision making more than their rural counterparts, mainly as a result of the differences in life style, response to cultural norms, family structure, access to contraceptives, education and

various types of activities.

Table 11.11

Percentage distribution of couples who gave the same responses about desired family size classified by place of residence.

| | DESIRED FAMILY SIZE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Small 1,2,3 | Moderate 4,5 | Large 6,7,8 | Very large 9+ | N | Proportion of identical responses |
| Small villages | 1.5 | 23.1 | 39.2 | 36.2 | 130 | 43.3 |
| Towns | 2.2 | 18.7 | 30.2 | 48.9 | 139 | 46.3 |
| City lower class | 7.8 | 29.4 | 29.4 | 33.3 | 51 | 51.0 |
| City middle class | 8.3 | 33.3 | 39.6 | 18.8 | 48 | 48.0 |
| City upper class | 17.2 | 39.7 | 31.0 | 13.8 | 58 | 58.0 |
| Refugee camps | 7.8 | 33.3 | 25.5 | 33.3 | 51 | 51.5 |
| Total population | 5.7 | 26.4 | 33.1 | 34.8 | 477 | 47.7 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

The couples educational level has an effect on both the proportion of identical responses and their distribution relative to desired family size. It can be noted from table 11.12 that any increase in educational level means an increase in the likelihood of spouses giving identical responses. The proportion of identical responses increased from 46.6% among illiterate wives to 51.5% among wives with a higher education level. Also wives educational level affected the distribution of responses

relative to desired family size. For instance, in small families the proportion of identical responses increased from zero to 18.9% among illiterate and highly educated women respectively, while those wanting a moderate family size the proportion increased from 3.3% among illiterate wives to 70% among women with higher education levels.

Table 11.12 also shows the effect of husbands educational level on the proportion and distribution of identical responses. This follows the same pattern.

Why should the probability of spouses giving identical responses increase with educational level? It may be attributed to the following factors:

1. Younger people achieve more education than the older ones. As shown in table 11.13 age had an influence on the likelihood of couples achieving identical responses.
2. Education affects couples' attitudes towards family size through new ideas and individual aspirations, consequently, encouraging them to discuss family planning issues.
3. Education makes the couples less susceptible to the influence of traditional social views.
4. Education enhances the woman's position in the family and her role in the decision making process, by giving her the opportunity to work and to contribute towards the family income.
5. Education affects communication between couples as already mentioned earlier.

Table 11.12

Percentage distribution of identical responses according to desired family size classified by husbands' and wives' level of education.

| EDUCATIONAL LEVEL | DESIRED FAMILY SIZE Small 1,2,3 | Moderate 4,5 | Large 6,7,8 | Very large 9+ | N | Proportion of identical responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wives | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | - | 3.3 | 26.3 | 70.4 | 152 | 46.6 |
| Low | 2.9 | 26.0 | 44.1 | 27.0 | 204 | 48.7 |
| Middle | 16.2 | 45.6 | 33.8 | 4.4 | 68 | 45.0 |
| High | 18.9 | 69.8 | 9.4 | 1.9 | 53 | 51.5 |
| Husbands | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | - | 2.8 | 25.0 | 72.2 | 72 | 45.8 |
| Low | 2.5 | 19.1 | 34.8 | 43.6 | 241 | 47.7 |
| Middle | 7.7 | 44.9 | 39.7 | 7.7 | 78 | 47.8 |
| High | 17.4 | 50.0 | 29.1 | 3.5 | 86 | 49.4 |
| Total | 5.7 | 26.4 | 33.1 | 34.8 | 477 | 47.7 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

It is important to explain the level of identical responses with regard to the age of each spouse.

Table 11.13 shows that the proportion of identical responses decreased gradually with increases in the wife's age up to 40 years of age and up to 50 years of age for husbands. Thereafter the relationship reverses. The reason for this pattern may be attributed to the fact that most couples of 40 years of age and over have completed their childbearing period and tend to rationalise their behaviour in terms of reporting theier actual number of children as their desired family size.

Table 11.13

Percentage distribution of identical responses of both husbands and wives according to desired family size by respondent's age.

| RESPONDENTS AGE | DESIRED FAMILY SIZE Small 1,2,3 | Moderate 4,5 | Large 6,7,8 | Very large 9+ | N | Proportion of identical responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Wives** | | | | | | |
| < than 20 | 13.0 | 52.8 | 35.2 | - | 23 | 54.8 |
| 20 - 29 | 12.9 | 52.1 | 28.6 | 6.4 | 140 | 48.1 |
| 30 - 39 | 2.1 | 30.5 | 50.5 | 16.8 | 95 | 44.4 |
| 40 - 49 | 2.8 | 7.5 | 34.9 | 54.7 | 106 | 48.2 |
| 50 - 59 | 1.3 | 3.8 | 23.1 | 71.8 | 78 | 51.0 |
| 60+ | - | 2.9 | 20.0 | 77.1 | 35 | 44.3 |
| **Husbands** | | | | | | |
| * < than 29 | 14.4 | 55.6 | 28.9 | 1.1 | 90 | 50.3 |
| 30 - 39 | 6.7 | 42.9 | 37.8 | 12.6 | 119 | 47.8 |
| 40 - 49 | 1.4 | 23.3 | 43.8 | 31.5 | 73 | 43.2 |
| 50 - 59 | 4.9 | 5.8 | 32.0 | 57.3 | 103 | 49.3 |
| 69+ | - | 2.2 | 23.9 | 73.9 | 92 | 48.2 |
| **Total** | 5.7 | 26.4 | 33.1 | 34.8 | 477 | 47.7 |

* 2 husbands were found under 20 years of age.

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

The conclusions which can be drawn from tables 11.11, 11.12 and 11.13 are that couples characteristics (age, education and place of residence) do have an important influence on the likelihood of spouses holding similar views on family size. Where such agreement exists it can be expected to favourably affect desired family size and ultimately the number of children in the family. In particular, as the level of education and urbanisation rises in a society, one can expect changes in fertility behaviour to occur.

## 11.7 Couples agreement on additional children

As mentioned earlier, one of the criticisms which has been raised of fertility preference studies is that they have been restricted to the wive's responses. In most Arab countries, because of strong male dominance in decision making, it is particularly important to examine the level of agreement between marriage partners on fertility matters.

This section, attempts to measure the levels of agreement between spouses regarding their desire for additional children. Table 11.14 shows that about 60% of couples agreed with each other about the desire not to have another child. Less than 10% of couples disagreed, with one partner wanting an additional child. For example, 6.5% of husbands wanted additional children contrary to their wives wishes. A small percentage of wives (2.5%) wanted to have more children contrary to their husbands wishes.

The highest proportion of couples who held different views towards having additional children was found in towns. The reason for this may be the transitional stage of urbanisation experienced by these families. By contrast, none of the city middle class wives wanted additional children if their husbands did not want them.

Table 11.14 also shows that 91.5% of couples who had less than 4 children agree on having more children. As table 11.14 points out, the proportion of couples who want more children decreases with the increasing number of

children in the family. It decreased from 91.5% for couples who have less than 4 children to 14.8% among couples who already have more than 10 children. The big differences in couples agreement towards having additional children was found among those who had 4 to 6 children. This can be explained to some extent by gender preferences (see earlier chapter).

Table 11.14

Husbands/wives views on reproductive behaviour classified by place of residence and number of living children (percentages).

| | Only husband wants another child | Only wife wants another child | Neither want another child | Both want another child | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AREA | | | | | |
| Small villages | 3.4 | 2.6 | 62.7 | 31.3 | 233 |
| Towns | 13.5 | 4.3 | 27.2 | 25.0 | 208 |
| City lower class | 4.9 | 1.2 | 57.3 | 36.6 | 82 |
| City middle class | 4.8 | - | 66.3 | 28.9 | 83 |
| City upper class | 5.1 | 2.6 | 52.6 | 39.7 | 78 |
| Refugee camps | 2.4 | 1.2 | 60.2 | 36.1 | 83 |
| NUMBER OF LIVING CHILDREN | | | | | |
| Less than 4 | 3.3 | 0.7 | 91.5 | 4.5 | 330 |
| Between 4-6 | 10.2 | 2.6 | 48.7 | 38.5 | 234 |
| Between 7-9 | 8.1 | 6.7 | 22.8 | 62.4 | 149 |
| 10 and more | 5.5 | 1.9 | 14.8 | 77.8 | 54 |
| TOTAL | 6.5 | 2.5 | 59.7 | 31.3 | 767 |

Source: Author's data, 1988.

It is useful to examine the level of agreement amongst spouses about having additional children, relative to their mean desired family size, and also to compare this with the average desired family size in the areas in which they were living. Table 11.15 shows that both husbands and wives tend to agree to have additional children when the mean desired family size is less than the average desired family size of the area where the couples live. For example, the mean desired family size is 6.4 children when both couples agree to have additional children. This average is less than the general average of desired family size for all couples in the reproductive ages (6.9 children). Also, husbands and wives tended to agree not to have additional children when their average desired family size was 7.9 children or more (i.e. a level higher than the general average of 6.9 children).

Disagreement between husbands and wives about having additional children varies with the mean desired family size. The desire of wives for additional children seems to be consistent with the general trends which have been described. Wives prefer to have additional children mainly when their mean desired family size is less than the general average of the area in which they live. It is less easy to find logical explanations of husbands' desires to have additional children contrary to their wives wishes.

Table 11.15

Mean desired family size (MDFS) of couples of childbearing age classified by place of residence and level of agreement about desire for additional children.

| MDFS CLASSIFIED BY AREA AND BY COUPLES VIEWS ON ADDITIONAL CHILDREN | Overall | wife wants/ husband does not want | husband wants/ wife does not want | neither want | both want |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AREA | | | | | |
| Small village | 7.3 | 6.4 | 8.9 | 6.9 | 8.3 |
| Town | 7.3 | 7.6 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 8.9 |
| City lower class | 6.8 | 6 | 6 | 6.3 | 7.6 |
| City middle class | 6.2 | 5.6 | - | 5.8 | 7.1 |
| City upper class | 5.5 | 3.9 | 6.3 | 5.2 | 6.0 |
| Refugee camps | 6.9 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 6.3 | 8.1 |
| TOTAL | 6.9 | 6.8 | 7.3 | 6.4 | 7.9 |

MDFS = Mean desired family size

Source: Author's data, 1988.

The conclusions which can be drawn from tables 11.14 and 11.15 are:

1. The majority of couples (90%) agree with each other as to whether or not they will have additional children while only 10% have different opinions.
2. The mean desired family size for couples who agree to have additional children is less than the average desired family size for all couples in the childbearing cohorts.

3. For spouses who disagree, wives' desires regarding additional children are easier to explain than their husbands' desires.
4. Number of living children is a very important factor in determining a couples agreement to have or not to have additional children.

## 11.8 Conclusion

This chapter was dedicated to the investigation and examination of the effect of couples' relations on fertility preferences. Couples' relationships were measured in different ways: couples' communication, identical responses towards desired family size and couples' agreement about having additional children.

Couples' relationships and their decision making has been shown to be determined by cultural factors and social norms. Socio-economic characteristics of couples have a significant influence on couples' communication, by reducing the husband's relative power in decision making. Beckman (1983) has argued that more egalitarian decision making reduces male dominance in relation to matters like the number of children preferred and contraceptive use.

Greater communication between couples may lead to more success in controlling fertility behaviour (Bagozzi and Vanloo, 1978). The findings of the study indicate that more than half of West Bank couples fall into a group achieving moderate levels of communication. Urbanisation, higher education and family income are associated

positively with a good level of communication, while respondents age is negatively related to the level of communication.

The majority of couples with better levels of communication have a desire for small and moderate family sizes. They are less likely to favour male child preference and less likely to exceed their desired family size. They are also more in favour of using modern contraceptives as compared with those with moderate and low levels of communication.

The proportion of spouses who gave identical responses about desired family size was higher than those who gave identical responses towards gender preference. Most of those who gave identical responses about the desired number of children, were found among those who desired large and very large families. Most of the identical responses about gender preference were found among those who prefer the number of boys to exceed the number of girls by 2 or 3. Urban couples gave a higher proportion of identical responses than their rural counterparts. Also couple's educational levels have been shown to be positively related to giving identical responses. The findings of this chapter reveal that the majority of West Bank couples (90%) have reached some agreement as to whether or not to have additional children.

## CHAPTER 12

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTUAL AND DESIRED FAMILY SIZE

## 12.1 Introduction

Analysis of human reproductive behaviour and the factors that influence a couple's decision to have a given number of children requires that one tries to evaluate both the actual fertility experience (number of living children) of a couple and also their preferences regarding the number of children desired. As has been shown earlier in this thesis, in Arab society it is also important to consider the desired number of male children.

This chapter will focus mainly on the relation between desired and actual family size and the factors which affect this relationship. The chapter commences by asking how close is the association between them and attempts to measure the probability of a couple stating the number of living children as their desired family size.

This thesis has already shown that West Bank couples have a strong bias towards having male children. As a result, part of this chapter specifically investigates the relationship between number of male children desired and the number of living male children as a determinant of a couple's desired family size.

## 12.2 Problems of comparison

One of the criticisms of surveys asking about desired family size is that respondents tend to state their desired number of children as the number they actually have, or a

figure very similar to their number of living children (Hauser, 1967). This means that respondents try to modify their response to coincide with actual family size as a kind of rationalisation of their actions. This avoids implying that any children are unwanted, especially for respondents who have gone on having children beyond their true "ideal" number (Pullum, 1980).

The relationship between desired and actual number of living children has been examined by many researchers such as Hawley and Prachuabmoh (1965) and Cowgill (1968). The problem with such comparative studies is that it is difficult to estimate the proportion of respondents who modify their responses to be identical to the actual number of living children. The number of children desired tends to increase with the number of living children. Farooq (1985) suggests that spouses at any given time have an idea of the number of children desired, but that this number changes in relation to their actual experience. Farooq also found that actual fertility experience in Nigeria was observed to be consistent with family size preferences, while Knodel and Pitaktepsombati (1973) found in Thailand, that the vast majority of respondents preferred a number of children which was different to the number of living children. Differences between these researchers may have arisen due to the differences in the development level of the societies being studied as well as cultural variations between them.

Rationalisation of the number of children preferred can only account for the cases where the number of children preferred equals the actual number of surviving children (Lightbourne, 1985), especially in societies where contraceptives were not used effectively. Halver and Pardoko (1966), found in their study in East Java that 25% of men and women state their family size preference as equal to the actual number of surviving children. Knodel and Prachuabmoh (1973) reached a similar conclusion, finding that 26% of Thai women in the reproductive ages 15-49 gave identical responses to questions on desired and actual number of children. By contrast Bachi and Matras (1964) found in their study in Israel that only 3% of a group of several thousand maternity cases admitted a preference for the same number of children as their actual family size. The researcher in this study found that 17% of wives and 15% of husbands stated the desired number of children to be equal to the number of children they already had. The proportion of respondents who state the desired number of children as the same as their actual family size cannot be considered as equivalent to the proportion of couples who rationalise their desires after the event. Clearly some genuine coincidence does occur. It is therefore useful to estimate the percentage of these respondents are only rationalising their actions after the event.

There are several direct methods that can be used to produce such an estimate. They include:

(1) Asking both husbands and wives, who have achieved or exceeded the desired number of children, whether they want additional children in the future. This is done to discover how many spouses give identical responses. Amongst partners where rationalisation was a possible explanation of the coincidence of their responses, the author's study in the West Bank showed that about 90% of husbands and 86% of wives who achieved or exceeded family size did not want additional children.

(2) Asking women in this category whether they are using efficient contraceptive methods. The findings of the author's study showed that only about 55% of women in this category were using contraceptives. The low percentage of current contraceptive users can be partially explained by the fact that many of the women in the survey who claimed to have achieved their desired number of children were old and unlikely to have further children as a result. There was little point in asking husbands about the use of contraceptives since few men use contraceptives in the West Bank. The findings of the study supported this belief. Only 0.3% of married men used condoms. Use was restricted to the young and educated. Use of condoms was also perceived as a method of achieving child spacing rather than as a means of stopping having children altogether.

(3) The use of follow up surveys. This could be done by

re-interviewing after 5 to 10 years the respondents whose preferred number of children was equal to their actual number of living children. This method of back-checking is perhaps the most accurate way of checking the validity of responses.

It is also important to distinguish between two types of rationalisation behaviour which relate to the wife's age. The findings of the study revealed that 70% of all women who stated their preferred family size to be the same as their actual number of living children were in the reproductive age cohorts (under 50 years of age). On the other hand, only 30% of older women gave this response.

Table 12.1 shows the relationship between desired and actual number of children (together) by number of living children for both the wives and husbands. It can be noted from the table that the proportion of wives and husbands whose preferred and actual family size were the same, proved to be similar to the proportion of wives and husbands whose desired family size was less than their actual number of living children.

The vast majority of husbands (73.5%) and wives (65.3%) stated that their actual number of children was less than their desired number. The reason for this might be due to the high average desired family size since half of the wives and 63% of husbands with seven living children stated that their desired family size was higher than their actual size. The proportion of couples whose desired family size was higher than the actual number of children

decreased with increases in the number of living children. The decline among wives was more obvious than among their husbands.

Table 12.1 shows that desired and actual family size are most likely to coincide for women with 6 children, while for men this occurs only when they have 8 children. The most interesting result which is shown in table 12.1 is that about 40% of wives and 18% of husbands with 8 living children reported that this actual family size exceeded their ideal number. By contrast only 12% of wives and 7% of husbands who had 5 children stated this. If these results are true for the West Bank as a whole it reveals a major challenge for the family planning programme. The fundamental problem seems to be not so much the need to teach efficient contraceptive usage, but to change couples attitudes towards childbearing and ideal family size. Only then will contraceptive use become more acceptable (Davis, 1967).

Discussion of table 12.1 also leads to the argument that the tendency for some couples to give identical responses to questions about their actual and their desired family size is not just a product of rationalisation effects. It is also the product of underestimates by below parity couples of the number of children they will ultimately want.

Table 12.1

Comparison between desired and actual number of chidlren by number of living children for wives and husbands.

| Wives (% across) | | | | | Husbands (% across) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of living children | Desired exceeds actual No. | Desired equals actual No. | Desired less than actual No. | N | Desired exceeds actual No. | Desired equals actual No. | Desired less than actual No. | N |
| 0 | 100.0 | - | - | 99 | 100.0 | - | - | 99 |
| 1 | 100.0 | - | - | 84 | 100.0 | - | - | 84 |
| 2 | 100.0 | - | - | 75 | 98.7 | 1.3 | - | 75 |
| 3 | 93.0 | 5.8 | 1.2 | 86 | 88.4 | 10.5 | 1.2 | 86 |
| 4 | 70.1 | 27.8 | 2.1 | 97 | 81.4 | 15.5 | 3.1 | 97 |
| 5 | 62.2 | 25.5 | 12.2 | 98 | 69.4 | 23.5 | 7.1 | 98 |
| 6 | 52.9 | 35.3 | 11.8 | 102 | 71.6 | 19.6 | 8.8 | 102 |
| 7 | 50.5 | 25.7 | 23.8 | 101 | 63.4 | 17.8 | 18.8 | 101 |
| 8 | 35.8 | 25.4 | 38.8 | 67 | 52.2 | 29.9 | 17.9 | 67 |
| 9 | 48.6 | 9.5 | 41.9 | 74 | 58.1 | 18.9 | 23.0 | 74 |
| 10+ | 18.1 | 23.3 | 58.6 | 116 | 33.6 | 25.9 | 40.5 | 116 |
| Total | 65.3 | 17.0 | 17.6 | 999 | 73.5 | 15.0 | 11.5 | 999 |

*Source: Author's survey, 1988.*

## 12.3 Determinants of the relationship between desired and actual family size

The relationship between actual and desired family size is affected by contraceptive use, gender preference and post event rationalisation. This section attempts to explain to what extent these factors are responsible in determining the relationship between actual and desired family size.

### 12.3.1 Contraceptive use

In developing countries there has been increasing interest in the factors that influence birth planning decisions. Most research has focussed on the socio-economic variables, although some studies have investigated the influence of cultural values and attitudes towards desired childbearing decisions (Fawcett and Arnold, 1973; Hoffman and Hoffman, 1973; Jaccard and Davidson, 1976). These studies found that attitudes are a very important factor in determining couples' decisions, and subsequently affect the relation between the desired and actual family size. Davis (1967) argues that closing the gap between the desired family size and actual number of living children basically depends on changing couples attitudes towards desired family size and contraceptive usage.

In Arab countries contraceptives are more likely to be used after the third birth, while the first years of marriage will not be greatly affected by such methods (Fargues, 1989). The findings of this study were that 20%

of all women in the reproductive age cohorts never used contraceptives and did not wish to use them in the future. Of this group 28.3% said their views were a result of religious teachings and 22.6% referred to the side effects and risks of using such methods.

Analysis of the relationship between the number of children desired and actual family size should involve consideration of the proportion of women using efficient contraceptives. Coombs (1974) argues that the best measure for the validity of stated family size preference is the proportion of women who use efficient contraceptives. Shah and Palmore (1979) have argued that desired fertility levels should always be consistent with contraceptive use among married women in the reproductive age cohorts. To clarify this further, it is expected that women who have already achieved or exceeded their desired number of children should be much more likely to use contraceptives effectively than others.

It is clear that in societies where family planning programmes are effectively executed and where contraceptive use is widely practiced, one can expect fertility control to be the dominant influence on fertility. Desired family size will, therefore, influence the actual number of living children, with couples producing their targeted number of children. On the other hand, in traditional societies with their high fertility levels, and where only a small proportion of women use contraceptives, it can be assumed that fertility preferences play a much lesser role in

shaping the actual family size. Consequently, it is to be expected that actual family size and traditional cultural values will affect the desired number of children, rather than vice versa. In transitional societies the gap between attitudes and actual behaviour and between the actual and the desired family size will be greatest, and it therefore becomes of particular interest to determine whether actual family size affects a couples desire to have a given number of children or whether the inverse is the case.

In the West Bank the proportion of women using efficient contraceptives is not very high, but there is an acceleration in development process. These forces may change the attitudes of couples towards number of children ultimately wanted. Also, cultural norms and religious teachings differ in their influence on different groups and sub-areas. It can be concluded that if contraception was being effectively used and the desired family size was the major force in influencing actual family size then the data from the survey should have shown no change in desired family size with increase in the actual number of children in the family.

The problem for this researcher was to resolve which of these factors were responsible for the high correlation between desired and actual family size in the West Bank. The next section of this chapter attempts to solve this problem.

### 12.3.2 Gender Preference

Male preference has been agreed earlier in the thesis to be an important factor contributing to high fertility rates. Despite this, it is a factor which has received little attention in most developing countries. Exceptions include the work of Dhindsa (1986) who found in his study that 97% of couples who were satisfied with small family sizes (three children or less) had at least one male child in their families. By contrast he found that about 91% of couples who exceeded their desired family size had done so in the hope of having male children or more male children. Also El-Khorazati (1985) confirmed in his study in rural Egypt the strength of male child preference in motivating couples in their desire for additional children. The same is true on the West Bank as has been shown earlier in this thesis.

Male preference sometimes becomes an obstacle for female use of contraceptives. Markle (1973) found that the proportion of women who used birth control after having male children was higher than the proportion of women who practiced contraceptives after having female children. The analysis of sex preference as a determining factor of desired family size is therefore of particular importance in relation to couples who have already achieved their desired family size but who have not attained the desired sex composition.

Table 12.2

Average family size desired for husbands - wives by actual number of sons and number of living children.

| No. of living sons | Number of living children | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ | N |
| 0 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 6.7 | 4.0 | 7.0 | 6.0 | 8.0 | - | - | - | 155 |
| | (6.1) | (5.5) | (7.6) | (8.3) | (5.3) | (9.5) | (10) | (12) | (-) | (-) | (-) | |
| 1 | | 5.3 | 6.1 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 5.4 | 7.1 | 8.2 | 11.0 | - | - | 170 |
| | | (5.4) | (6.4) | (6.9) | (7.4) | (6.1) | (9.0) | (7.3) | (9.0) | - | - | |
| 2 | | | 5.1 | 6.2 | 5.5 | 6.7 | 6.9 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 8.7 | 9.0 | 173 |
| | | | (5.6) | (6.7) | (6.5) | (8.1) | (7.9) | (8.9) | (10.1) | (9.6) | (9.3) | |
| 3 | | | | 6.8 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.6 | 170 |
| | | | | (6.7) | (6.6) | (7.9) | (7.9) | (10.0) | (9.9) | (8.8) | (10.8) | |
| 4 | | | | | 5.5 | 7.0 | 6.9 | 8.2 | 7.5 | 9.1 | 7.7 | 133 |
| | | | | | (5.8) | (8.1) | (8.9) | (8.1) | (8.5) | (10.2) | (10.5) | |
| 5 | | | | | | 6.6 | 6.5 | 8.2 | 7.6 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 94 |
| | | | | | | (7.2) | (8.6) | (8.7) | (9.4) | (8.7) | (10.5) | |
| 6 | | | | | | | 9.0 | 7.7 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 9.8 | 58 |
| | | | | | | | (7.2) | (8.0) | (10.3) | (10.1) | (11.0) | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | 10.0 | - | 8.7 | 9.9 | 33 |
| | | | | | | | | (10.0) | (-) | (8.7) | (11.3) | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | - | - | 8.9 | 8 |
| | | | | | | | | | (-) | (-) | (10.1) | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | 10.0 | - | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | (9.0) | (-) | |
| 10 and 10+ | | | | | | | | | | | 9.5 | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | (13.2) | |

Source: Author's data, 1988.
( ) = Husband's average

Table 12.2 shows the mean desired family size for different combinations of children (boys and girls) in the West Bank. It is clear from the table that the increase in average family size desired with number of living children is stronger when the family has only female children. For example, the average desired family size in a family with only one female child was 5.5 for both husbands and wives. For those families with seven daughters and no sons the desired size increased to 8.0 children for wives and 12.0 children for husbands. A similar but weaker effect was found for families with only one son (Table 12.2).

It can also be noted from table 12.2 that at all levels of actual family size, the increase in the number of living sons is not strongly associated with the total desired family size. The reason for such a weak relationship can be attributed to several factors.

1) A family with more male children may be encouraged to have or desire additional children.
2) Couples tend to increase the desired number of children if the family has more female children in order to have at least an equal number of children of each sex.
3) If there is a predominance of male children then it is more likely that a couple will have their desired family size.
4) Families with all children from one gender normally want to have at least one child from the other gender.

The interaction between these factors makes the association between average desired family size and number of living sons less strong than expected in the West Bank. In general, in male dominated societies, it is expected that the average desired family size and the average number of male children preferred will increase with the increasing number of living children.

From table 12.3 one can observe that in all categories, the average family size and the average total male children preferred by both husbands and wives increased gradually with increases in number of living children. The mean number of male children also increased in parallel with increases in average family size desired by each couple. The first reason for finding similarities between desired and actual family sizes can therefore be dismissed. Effective fertility control in relation to desired family size is not the cause.

The average number of total children desired by wives ranged between 5.3 for women without children to 8.6 children for women who had 10 living children or more. The tables also shows that husbands have a higher desire both in terms of the average number of children desired and the mean number of males preferred. Despite this comparison of husbands and wives responses reveals a similar overall trend.

Table 12.3

Relationship between number of living children and both the average number of children desired and the mean number of male children preferred by wives and husbands.

| | Wives | | Husbands | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of living children | Mean No. of children preferred | Mean No. of male children preferred | Mean No. of children preferred | Mean No. of male children preferred |
| 0 | 5.3 | 3.4 | 5.7 | 4.1 |
| 1 | 5.3 | 3.4 | 5.4 | 3.7 |
| 2 | 5.7 | 3.7 | 6.1 | 4.3 |
| 3 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 6.4 | 4.6 |
| 4 | 5.7 | 3.7 | 6.4 | 4.4 |
| 5 | 6.4 | 4.1 | 7.4 | 5.1 |
| 6 | 7.1 | 4.9 | 8.1 | 5.7 |
| 7 | 7.8 | 5.3 | 8.3 | 6.1 |
| 8 | 7.8 | 5.4 | 8.9 | 6.7 |
| 9 | 8.5 | 6.4 | 9.0 | 6.8 |
| 10 and 10+ | 8.6 | 6.5 | 9.4 | 7.3 |
| Total | 6.78 | 4.66 | 7.38 | 5.35 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

The average number of children desired is higher than the number of living children, with the exception of couples who have 8.0 children or more. The data in the table also gives grounds for the conclusion that increases in the average number of children desired with increases in the number of living children is not just a product of rationalisation after the event. It would seem to be a product of poor contraceptive use.

It is possible to conclude from table 12.3 that each addition to the number of living children is also accompanied by a marginal increment in the mean number of children desired and the average number of males preferred. Rationalisation effects also do not necessarily account for all the strong associations observed between the number of living children and the two averages.

Table 12.4 shows the statistical relationship between the number of living children and both the average number of children and number of male children preferred by husbands and wives. It can be noted from the table that the correlations are positive and strong. The results are all statistically significant at the 0.001 level of confidence.

It is of course possible that the results of Table 12.4 simple reflect a position where younger couples have genuinely lower preferences than older couples (Lightbourne, 1985). In view of the data presented elsewhere in this thesis, it seems probable that the main reasons for the correlation are not this effect, but rather post-event rationalisation and adjustments in desired family size by below parity couples.

Table 12.4

Statistical relation between number of living children and both mean number of children desired and average number of male children preferred for both husbands and wives.

| Correlated variables | F value | Degree of freedom | Significant level | Correlation R | Correlation Eta |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Husbands | | | | | |
| Between no. of living children and average family size desired | 36.7 | 10 | 0.001 | +0.51 | +0.52 |
| Between no. of living children and average number of male children desired | 29.4 | 10 | 0.001 | +0.47 | +0.48 |
| Wives | | | | | |
| Between no. of living children and average family size desired | 39.1 | 10 | 0.001 | +0.52 | +0.53 |
| Between no. of living children and average number of male children desired | 29.4 | 10 | 0.001 | +0.48 | +0.50 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

On average couples with an equal number of sons and daughters want 0.39 of a child more than is suggested by actual family size. Those with an excess of daughters want 0.5 of a child more than is suggested by actual family size (0.8 by husbands and 0.2 by wives). These values are obtained by weighting the differences between the mean stated desired family size and the expected mean desired family size shown in table 12.5.

Table 12.5

The differences between mean desired family size weighted by sex composition and the mean family size by number of living children.

| No. of living sons | Number of living children | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
| 0 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.4 | -1.7 | 0.6 | -1.1 | 0.2 | - | - | - |
| | 0 | (0.1) | (1.5) | (1.9) | (-1.1) | (2.1) | (1.9) | (3.7) | (-) | (-) | (-) |
| 1 | | 0 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.7 | -1 | 0 | 0.4 | 3.2 | - | - |
| | | (0) | (0.3) | (0.5) | (1) | (-1.3) | (0.9) | (-1) | (0.1) | - | - |
| 2 | | | -0.6 | -0.1 | -0.2 | 0.3 | -0.2 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| | | | (-0.5) | (0.3) | (0.1) | (0.7) | (-0.2) | (0.6) | (1.2) | (0.6) | (-0.1) |
| 3 | | 0.5 | 0.3 | -0.1 | 1.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | -0.2 | 0 | | |
| | | (0.3) | (0.2) | (0.5) | (-0.2) | (1.7) | (1) | (-0.2) | (1.4) | | |
| 4 | | | -0.2 | 0.6 | -0.2 | 0.4 | -0.3 | 0.6 | -0.9 | | |
| | | | (-0.6) | (0.7) | (0.8) | (-0.2) | (-0.4) | (1.2) | (1.1) | | |
| 5 | | | | 0.2 | -0.6 | 0.4 | -0.2 | 1.1 | 1 | | |
| | | | | (-0.2) | (0.5) | (0.4) | (0.5) | (-0.3) | (1.1) | | |
| 6 | | | | | 1.9 | -0.1 | -0.3 | -0.9 | 1.2 | | |
| | | | | | (-0.9) | (-0.3) | (1.4) | (1.1) | (1.6) | | |
| 7 | | | | | | 2.2 | - | 0.2 | 1.3 | | |
| | | | | | | (1.7) | (-) | (-0.3) | (1.9) | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | - | - | 0.3 | | |
| | | | | | | | (-) | (-) | (0.7) | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | 1.5 | - | | |
| | | | | | | | | (0) | (-) | | |
| 10+ | | | | | | | | | 0.9 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | (3.8) | | |

Source: Author's data, 1988.
Mean desired family size, by sex of children - mean desired family size.
- = No cases in mean desired family size weighted by sex composition.
( ) = Husband's average.

Thus it appears that while the sex composition of existing children does have an influence on the mean desired family size, it is expected that the gap between the actual and desired family size increased/decreased depending upon the gender of living children and the gender of expected new children.

12.3.3 Rationalisation

It is possible to measure the extent of rationalisation by an indirect method. For example, by asking each couple about the number of children they want their children (sons and daughters) to have. Equally one can ask the question "if your neighbours or some relatives ask for your advice with regard to the number of children they should have, what is the number you would suggest?" This kind of question gives greater freedom to respondents (Cowgill, 1968). By comparing their responses with their desires, it is possible to estimate the rationalisation effect. Also, such comparison between the ideal and desired family size can give an estimate to the rationalisation effect. This approach was, however, used by the author in his survey.

From the findings of the author's study, it is clear that the ideal family size and the average number of children that parents would wish their own children to have, is less than the number they prefer for themselves. For example, the average ideal family size (5.66) was less than the average desired number of children by husbands (7.92) and by wives (7.0). Only 18% of husbands and 12.5%

of wives preferred their children to have the same number or more children than they themselves had. This finding is supported by Stycos (1965), who found that the mean desired family size that respondents chose for themselves was slightly higher than the mean number which they chose for their children. This gives a clear indication that couples rationalise the desired number of children to suit their high fertility level.

12.4 Probability of stating actual number of children as the desired number

This section attempts to measure the probability values for husbands and wives with a given number of living children declaring any given number of children as their ideal. Given the results of Table 12.6 it is not surprising that the highest probability is for couples to state identical values for their desired and actual number of children. The probability for couples to state the number of living children as the desired number is higher than the couples who have less or more than that number. For instance, the probability values in columns 2 and 5 are higher than the values in columns 3 and 6.

Table 12.6 also shows that the probability values for wives with X living children, and state X as the desired number, increases gradually with increases in the number of living children up to a threshold of 6 children. The probability values decrease beyond this point for wives who have 7, 8 and 9 children. The probability values for the

Table 12.6

Probability of stating a given number of children as the desired number of children by husbands and wives and whether or not the respondent's actual family size equals the given number.

| Given No. X | Wives | | | Husbands | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of living children equals X | No. of living children more or less than X | Differences | No. of living children equals X | No. of living children more or less than X | Differences |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 0 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | - | .0133 | .0108 | .0025 |
| 3 | 0.058 | 0.0383 | 0.0197 | .1047 | .0460 | .0587 |
| 4 | 0.278 | 0.1175 | 0.1605 | .1546 | .0743 | .0803 |
| 5 | 0.255 | 0.1387 | 0.0863 | .2347 | .1254 | .1093 |
| 6 | 0.352 | 0.1438 | 0.2082 | .1961 | .1137 | .0824 |
| 7 | 0.257 | 0.1169 | 0.1401 | .1782 | .0891 | .0891 |
| 8 | 0.254 | 0.1330 | 0.1210 | .2985 | .0815 | .2170 |
| 9 | 0.095 | 0.0378 | 0.0572 | .1892 | .0562 | .1330 |
| 10&10+ | 0.233 | 0.2140 | 0.0190 | .2586 | .3454 | -.0868 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

Calculating Column 2 by:

$$\frac{\text{No. of women with X living children who state X as desired}}{\text{Total number of women with X living children}}$$

Calculating Column 3 by:

$$\frac{\text{(Total no. of women stating X as desired) - (No. of women with X living children who state X as desired}}{\text{(Total women) - (Total no of women with X living children)}}$$

*Column 4 = Column 2 - Column 3*

last category (10 living children and more) is higher than the previous three categories. This may be because 10 in the last category is an aggregate probability for wives with 10 children or more. It is also true that 10 was a frequent response by those wanting large families.

By contrast with their wives, husbands seem to show no systematic trend with regard to their preferences on the number of living children in relation to actual number of children (column 5). The high probability values in columns 2 and 5 might have occurred for two reasons: effective use of contraceptives and the rationalisation effect. It is clear from the tables that the probability of wives stating the number of living children as the desired number is higher than for their husbands, especially among the families with less than 8 living children.

Columns 4 and 7 contain interesting information. These probabilities effectively set an upper limit for the proportion of couples with a given number of children who rationalise their actual number of children to be the desired number.

The differences between the probability values for wives (column 4) and husbands (column 7) and the minimal estimates of the same figures (column 3 and 6) define the range in which contraceptive use may be perceived to affect fertility.

## 12.5 Interpretation of the meaning of the relationship between actual and desired family size

In order to be able to describe the relationship between actual and desired family size as being logical and having significance, it was considered necessary to ask women about their plans for having further children. If it could be shown that they already had reached or exceeded their desired number of children, and did not wish to have more children then it would be possible to suggest that the relation was meaningful to respondents.

Table 12.7 shows the proportion of women in the reproductive ages who did not want any additional children, whether this involved exceeding their desired number of children or not. Table 12.7 shows that 72% of women who did not want any more children had already a family which was equal to or exceeded their desired number. In contrast 28% of women who did not want to have more children had not achieved their desired number of children. A high proportion of these women already had 5 to 8 children.

How far can this curious result be explained? Firstly, one might suggest that women have accepted their husband's or society's view on "desired family size", yet are expressing a personal desire to have no more children. Secondly, one might suggest that the responses of the women whose responses seem contradictory reflect a need for a more effective family planning programme to bring

aspirations and attainment of goals in fertility control close together.

Table 12.7

Comparison between actual and desired number of children for wives in the reproductive ages (15-49), not wanting any additional children (percentages).

| | Desired exceeds actual number | Desired equals or less than actual number |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 28.0 | 72.0 |

Source: Author's survey, 1988.

## 12.6 Conclusions

In order to have a better understanding of human behaviour, the relation between actual fertility experience and desired family size should be examined. The latter could be conceived of as influencing actual fertility experiences and vice versa. Namboodiri (1972) has argued that the determinants of actual behaviour and family size preference are interrelated, and that a study of single determinants would at best give an incomplete picture.

Several results can be drawn from the author's survey and examination of the relationships between desired and actual family size. These include:-

1. The average desired family size and number of male children preferred increased gradually for both husbands and wives in relation to increases in the number of living children. It was also found that the probability values increased (but not systematically) for both husbands and wives who stated the number of

living children as their desired number in relation to increases in the number of surviving children (especially among those who already had large families).

2. The proportion of women who indicated that desired family size equals the number of living children did not exceed 17%, of whom about 70% were women in the reproductive age cohorts. Most of these already had 4-8 children. Rationalisation effects became more obvious in cases where the respondents reported the desired family size as equal to the number of surviving children. For couples who stated a preference to have fewer children it would seem fair to suggest that their views reflect positive choices rather than after the event rationalisations. It was found that rationalisation effects decreased when the proportion of women who achieved or exceeded the desired number of children had used efficient contraceptives.

3. About 40% of wives and 19% of husbands who already had 8 children reported that their actual family size exceeded their desired size. Also, 12% of wives and 5% of husbands who already had 5 children reported that their desired family size was less than 5 children. This result reveals the necesity for family planning programmes.

4. About 20% of wives in the reproductive ages had never

used, and said they would never use, contraceptives. The majority of these women attributed this action to religious reasons and to the adverse effect of contraceptives.

5. The proportion of women who did not want additional children increased with increases in the number of living children (up to a peak level of 7 children, before starting to decline again). This reflects the fact that couples who have a large number of children become careless about having further children in their families.

6. The findings of this study reveals a complex mutual inter-relationship between desired and actual family size. Each one affects the other.

# CHAPTER 13

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

### 13.1 Introduction

In previous chapters, numerous topics at various levels of analysis were explored in order to increase the readers knowledge of West Bank couples attitudes, beliefs and behaviour towards aspects of fertility and desired family size. The purposes of this chapter are twofold: first, this chapter commences with a review of the main objectives of this study and a summary of the main findings as found from the data analysis. Second, it seeks to draw out the implications of the study and to present some suggestions and recommendations for future research.

### 13.2 Importance of the study

The principle objective of this study was to present the results of the author's survey of attitudes and preferences of West Bank couples towards fertility. Within the framework of this general objective, this study has aimed to examine the following topics:-

1. The way in which demographic changes have taken place in Palestine in general, and the West Bank in particular, in relation to the changing political situation.
2. The effect on fertility behaviour and attitudes of contrasting household characteristics in the West Bank, in terms of the effect of geographical factors such as the influence of rural, urban and refugee camp

environments.

3. The way in which social and cultural factors have influenced marriage patterns, childbearing behaviour and gender preferences.

4. The consistency of desired family size data in relation to different socio-economic, cultural and demographic variables and the implications for contraceptive usage.

5. To compare and contrast desired family size with actual fertility in order to determine the degree of influence each has on the other.

In seeking these various objectives, the importance of the study stems from the following points:

1. It is the first of its kind in the West Bank.

2. In its contribution to demographic knowledge, the study is considered to be an extension of work done in some other developing countries, although these other studies have been carried out in different political, cultural and socio-economic environments. As a result, this study paves the way for future research on fertility attitudes in developing countries.

3. Due to its nature, the study will help fill some of the gaps in the literature on childbearing behaviour.

4. The research survey serves as a crucial information base on which any family planning programme in the West Bank could be based. Similarly, the broader planning implications of the research should not go

unnoticed.

## 13.3 Contribution and research implication.

The present study is thought to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the influence of couples' attitudes and preferences on fertility behaviour. The findings clearly attest that in the context of the West Bank, culture and society play a significant role in shaping fertility behaviour. The data presented in this study and the differences between different sub areas indicated that couples preferences and behaviour are, to a large extent, culture-bound.

This study is regarded as a continuation of existing studies of fertility preferences in other Arab and developing countries. It has sought in this context to extend the knowledge of human fertility behaviour and attitudes towards having children. The findings suggest that West Bank couples' behaviour and attitudes are to a large extent influenced by the specific cultural and political factors which affect their situation rather than behaving in a fashion compatible with economistic demographic models. In many ways socio-political forces have placed the West Bank in a unique situation relative to other Arab countries. The Israeli occupation affects most aspects of Palestinian life in the West Bank, including family structure, mutual dependence between individuals and their families and the revival of traditional customs and values in order to maintain the cohesion and solidarity of the Palestinian family.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find differences between West Bank society and other Arab societies with regard to fertility preferences. The differences can be attributed to the fact that most changes in Arab countries are caused by socio-economic developments initiated by their governments and the local authorities. In the West Bank, in the absence of any government plan, political factors are the forces mainly responsible for such changes.

The results of this study are thought to have some implications for the future of West Bank society. Family planning programmes could benefit from this study through applying the knowledge which has been gained of couples' preferences, attitudes and decision making processes relative to contraceptive use. It is believed that the findings might help family planning units and public decision makers to understand better the nature of couples' fertility preferences, attitudes, beliefs, needs and desires. Therefore, use of the survey results could help planners to know better how to deal with couples, through a better assessment and understanding of their personal preferences and motivations with regard to family formation and childbearing.

The findings of this study suggest that the efficiency and essential success of family planning programmes would depend mainly on achieving changes in cultural attitudes and beliefs towards women's roles and positions in West Bank society. This can be achieved

through increasing female education and employment opportunities. In time this will lead, on the one hand, to a reduction in the effect of gender preferences and on the other hand, would help restore a balance in the relations between husbands and wives in family decision making. This would ultimately reduce fertility levels.

At the present time, family planning programmes could contribute to reducing fertility by increasing a couple's awareness of fertility regulation methods, by improving the availability of efficient contraceptives, and by reducing their cost. The use of contraceptives is more acceptable among young and educated couples since the idea of family planning through increasing the birth interval is much more acceptable to them than the idea of family limitation through the setting of an absolute upper limit on family size.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that a change in fertility preferences and attitudes towards reproductive behaviour is occurring, but only slowly.

13.4 Future research and recommendations.

In conclusion, there are some suggestions which the researcher feels he should make about future research directions:

1. As a result of the lack of data, a comprehensive census in the occupied territories is essential and should be carried out under neutral organisations, such as the United Nations, in order to reduce bias in the data resulting from the political motives of the enumerators

or respondents.

2. Differences in attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of couples between different culture groups has created the need for extensive cross cultural research. Therefore, research should be launched in a range of countries with different socio-economic and political environments in order to achieve a better understanding of the effects of culture on couples attitudes to childbearing and their beliefs and preferences on the subject on one hand, and actual childbearing behaviour on the other.
3. Research is needed to explore and analyse the impact of the political situation on fertility behaviour. Therefore, a comparative study between Palestinians who have lived under Israeli occupation and those who have lived in other Arab countries would be of great importance.
4. Future research is essential to measure and investigate the attitudes of unmarried youths (male and female) towards fertility preferences, contraceptive use and childbearing behaviour.
5. Future research is needed on the nature of married couples' personal relations and their impact on fertility attitudes and behaviour. This research may include the influence of family structure on fertility attitudes and behaviour.
6. Research on socio-economic relationships between

parents and their children may help in providing a partial explanation of fertility behaviour.

7. A follow up survey is of great importance to explore the gap between desired and actual family size in order to understand the changes which have occurred in couples attitudes and perceptions over a period of time.

8. In traditional societies which are characterised by male dominance, fertility research should include husbands as well as their wives. It would also be relevant sometimes to investigate the opinions of a couples parents and children since their perspectives are very important in the family building process.

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

(SUPPORTIVE LETTER - ENGLISH & ARABIC)

An-Najah National University

جامعة النجاح الوطنية

Nablus ✉ : 7 - Tel. 70042 , 76584

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نابلس ✉ : ٧ – تلفون ٧٠٠٤٢ , ٧٦٥٨٤

*Ref* :

الرقم :

*Date* : 1-5-1988

التاريخ :

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Faisal Zanoun

This letter introduces Mr. Faisal Zanoun . Mr. Zanoun is studying for the degree of Ph.D. in Demography at the university of Glasgow.

As part of his Ph.D. research he will be studying documents, consulting libraries, and undertaking an interview study using aquestionnaire.

I hope therefore that you will provide him with all the information needed inorder to enable him to complete his studies and research.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Ahmad Hamad

[redacted]

Dean, Faculty of Arts.

كلية الآداب
FACULTY OF ARTS

An-Najah National University
جامعة النجاح الوطنية
نابلس ✉ : ٧ – تلفون ٧٠٠٤٢ , ٧٦٥٨٤ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم Nablus ✉ : 7 - Tel. 70042 , 76584

الرقم : ١٩٨٨/٥/١ *Ref :*

التاريخ : *Date :*

الى من يهمه الامر

يعمل الاستاذ فيصل كايد رعنون مدرسا في قسم علم الاجتماع في كلية الاداب في جامعة النجاح الوطنية بنابلس حيث يقوم حاليا باجراء دراسة ميدانية من أجل اكمال رسالة الدكتوراه لذا ارجو حضرتكم التكرم بمساعدته وذلك باعطائه كافة ما يلزمه من معلومات لاجراء بحثه .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الاحترام والتقدير

عميد كلية الآداب
FACULTY OF ARTS

## APPENDIX 2

## HUSBAND'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral degree being undertaken at the University of Glasgow. Personal interviews are needed with husbands. Each interview will cover the following:

1. Household characteristics (general information)
2. House characteristics
3. Economic characteristics and relationships
4. Interpersonal relationships and decision making
5. Desired family size and gender preference

You will find that in many questions you are given a set of alternative answers to choose from, whereas in others you are asked to furnish your own answers. The information you provide will be used only for academic purposes and will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your co-operation would be deeply appreciated. It would also enhance the advancement of knowledge in the subject.

Researcher

Faisal Zanoun

Glasgow University.

General characteristics of household

| No. | Relation to head of household | Age | Place of birth | Educational level achieved | Work status | Religion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | |
| 11+ | | | | | | |

House characteristics

1. The house you are living in is (choose one alternative only):
   - a) Owned
   - b) Rented
   - c) Belongs to your father's family
   - d) Tied to work
   - e) From UNRWA
   - f) Other (specify) _____

2. If the house is rented, how much is the monthly rent?

- a) Less than 25 J.D.
- b) Between 25-49 J.D.
- c) Between 50-74 J.D.
- d) Between 75-99 J.D.
- e) More than 100 J.D.

3. Number of bedrooms and living rooms in the house?

_____

4. Do you share your house with some relatives?

- a) Yes
- b) No

5. If the answer is no, then where is your house located?

(Choose one alternative answer):

- a) Close to your relatives
- b) Near to your relatives
- c) Near to your wife's family
- d) In the same town as your relatives
- e) Other (specify) _____

6. Which of the following items do you possess?

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| - a) Private car | | |
| - b) Refrigerator | | |
| - c) Washing machine | | |
| - d) Black and white T.V. | | |
| - e) Colour T.V. | | |
| - f) Video | | |
| - g) Telephone | | |

Household economic characteristics and relationships

1. Employment status:

   - a) Employed - b) Unemployed

2. If the answer is (a), then what is the nature of your work?

   - a) Government employee
   - b) Construction
   - c) Industry (manufacturing)
   - d) Services
   - e) Labourer
   - f) Farmer
   - g) Self employed

3. What is your main job? _____

4. Location of your work:

   - a) In the same home town where you live
   - b) In Israel
   - c) In a different city or town
   - d) Abroad

5. Do you hold any other job in addition to the one outlined in question 3?

   - a) Yes - b) No

6. If you are currently unemployed, why?

   - a) Physically incapable
   - b) No jobs available
   - c) Not enthusiastic about work
   - d) Retired
   - e) Other (specify) _____

7. What is your family's monthly income in Jordanian dinars? _____

8. Does your family receive any type of financial aid?

- a) Yes - b) No

9. If yes, what is the source of this aid?

- a) Retirement wages
- b) Social security benefit
- c) Working children
- d) Charitable organisations
- e) Other (specify) _____

10. Does your family face any financial difficulty in meeting the needs of its children (if applicable)?

a) Yes b) No

11. If yes, to what extent?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes
- c) Occasionally
- d) Other (specify) _____

12. How much of your total monthly income is allocated to expenditure on children?

- a) Less than one third
- b) Nearly half
- c) Two thirds
- d) All
- e) No children

13. Do any of your children work?

- a) Yes - b) No

14. If yes, with whom does he/she work?

- a) With the family without wages
- b) With the family with wages
- c) With people other than the family

15. How much does each of the following contribute towards family income?

| Source | Percentage |
|---|---|
| - Husband's work | _____ |
| - Wife's work | _____ |
| - Married children | _____ |
| - Unmarried children | _____ |
| - From land | _____ |
| - From property | _____ |
| - From investment | _____ |
| - Pension and social security | _____ |
| - Other (specify) _____ | |

Social relationships and decision making

1. Your age at first marriage? _____
2. At the beginning of your marital life, did you live with your parents?
   - a) Yes - b) No
3. If yes, for how long?
   - a) Less than 6 months
   - b) Between 6-12 months
   - c) Between 1-5 years
   - d) More than 5 years
   - e) Still living with them

4. If your answer to question 2 is no, why?

- a) Need for independence
- b) Fear of parents meddling
- c) The house is small and inadequate
- d) Fear of financial committment to parents
- e) Other (specify) _____

5. If and when you have a daughter reaching marriagable age, to whom would you prefer her to marry?

- a) To a relative
- b) To a non-relative
- c) Up to her to decide
- d) Other (Specify) _____

6. If and when you have a son reaching marriagable age, to whom would you prefer him to marry?

- a) To a relative
- b) To a non-relative
- c) Up to him to decide
- d) Other (specify) _____

7. Have you discussed with your wife the desired number of children.

- a) Yes - b) No

8. If the answer is yes, when did the discussion take place?

- a) At the very beginning of your married life
- b) After having the first child
- c) After having more than one child
- d) Once the children became a burden to the family
- e) Other (specify) _____

9. If your wife is using, or wishes to use contraceptives, what is your attitude to such a practice?

- a) In favour
- b) Opposed
- c) Neutral
- d) Do not care

Desired family size and gender preference

1. Do you or did you prefer to have more male children than female?

   - a) Yes - b) No

2. Do you or did you prefer your first child to be male?

   - a) Yes - b) No

3. How many children do you prefer to have in your whole life?

   a) Sons _____ b) Daughters _____ c) Total _____

4. Your wife prefers to have:

   - a) More children than your desire
   - b) Same number of children
   - c) Less children than your desire

5. In your opinion, what is the ideal family size?

   a) Sons _____ b) Daughters _____ c) Total _____

6. If you would like more children, how soon after your last baby would you like to have him/her?

   _____

7. Following up on question 6, what is the gender preference preferred for a baby? _____

8. Were you in favour of having your last baby?

- a) Yes - b) No

9. If you do not want additional children, is it because?

- a) You have enough children
- b) Health reasons
- c) Economic reasons
- d) Social reasons
- e) Need to concentrate on the care of present children
- f) Others (specify) _____

10. If you have a married daughter, or when your daughter gets married, would you advise her to have:

- a) Less children than you desired
- b) The same number
- c) More children than you desire
- d) Others (specify) _____

11. If you have a married son, or when your son gets married, would you advise him to have:

a) Less children than you desired

b) The same number

c) More children than you desire

d) Others (specify)

## APPENDIX 3

## WIFE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Madam,

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral degree being undertaken at the University of Glasgow. Personal interviews are needed with wives. Each interview will cover the following:

1. Employment status
2. Marriage: attitudes
3. Childbearing behaviour
4. Decision making
5. Fertility attitudes and desired family size
6. Contraceptive methods

You will find that in many questions you are given a set of alternative answers to choose from, whereas in others you are asked to furnish your own answers. The information you provide will be used only for academic purposes and will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your cooperation would be deeply appreciated and would also enhance the advancement of knowledge on the subject.

Researcher

Faisal Zanoun

Glasgow University

Employment status

1. Are you working for a salary?

   - a) Yes - b) No

2. If yes, where do you work?

   - a) In the same area where you live
   - b) Outside your home town
   - c) At home (i.e. sewing)

3. What is the nature of your work?

   _____

4. Type of business ownership

   - a) Government sector
   - b) Private sector
   - c) Self employed
   - d) Others (specify) _____

5. While you are at work, who looks after your children?

   - a) Yourself
   - b) Your husband
   - c) Your husband's family
   - d) Your family
   - e) Neighbours
   - f) Depend on themselves
   - g) Nursery school
   - h) There are no children

6. What is your attitude towards womens' work?

   - a) In favour
   - b) Opposed

7. If you are in favour of women employed outside their homes, in what type of work would you prefer them to engage themselves in?
   - a) Education
   - b) Agriculture
   - c) Free enterprise
   - d) Self employed
   - e) Others (specify) _____

8. If you are against women's employment, is it because of:
   - a) Religious reasons (e.g. mixing)
   - b) Cultural reasons (e.g. women's role should be confined to the home)
   - c) Social reasons (e.g. women's work increase the corruption in the society)
   - d) Marital reasons (e.g. women's work causes conflict with her husband)
   - e) Others (specify) _____

Marriage attitudes

1. What was your age at first marriage? _____ years
2. Are you related to your husband in any way?
   - a) Yes - b) No
3. If yes, what kind of relation?
   - a) Close relative (from the extended family)
   - b) Member of the extended family
   - c) Relative but not from the extended family (mother's relatives) .pa

4. What is the age difference between you and your husband?

- a) Less than 3 years
- b) Between 3-5 years
- c) Between 6-8 years
- d) More than 9 years

5. How did you get to know your husband?

- a) Through education (schools, universities)
- b) At work
- c) Through relatives
- d) Did not know him before

6. If and when you have a daughter reaching marriagable age, to whom would you prefer her to marry?

- a) To a relative
- b) To a non relative
- c) Up to her to decide
- d) Others (specify) _____

7. If and when you have a son reaching marriagable age, to whom would you prefer him to marry?

- a) To a relative
- b) To a non relative
- c) Up to him to decide
- d) Others (specify) _____

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, using a scale ranging from 1 to 4 with 1 being "strongly agree" and 4 "strongly disagree".

| STATEMENT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Favour early female marriage (before 18 years of age) | | | | |
| b) Male higher education is better than marriage | | | | |
| c) Sons should marry before entering emplyment | | | | |
| d) The wife should be older than her husband | | | | |
| e) Favour exchange marriages | | | | |
| f) Marriage between relatives negatively affect children's health | | | | |
| g) Kinship marriages reduce wifes freedom | | | | |

Childbearing behaviour

1. In your opinion, what is the main motive behind childbearing?

2. In comparison with your mother, how many children would you like to have?

- a) Less than what your mother had
- b) More than what your mother had
- c) The same as your mother
- d) You have no desire for children

3. If you already have or would like the first child to be male, what name would you rather give him?

- a) The same as his grandfather
- b) Modern name
- c) Religious name
- d) Political name
- e) Others (specify) _____

4. If you have three children or more and would like to have additional ones, is it because?

- a) Most of your living children are females
- b) The children are God given
- c) Children strengthen society
- d) Political situation
- e) Your husband wants more children
- f) Others (specify) _____

5. In your opinion to what extent do children support their parents nowadays?

- a) Less than the past generation
- b) More than the past generation
- c) The same
- d) Do not know

6. If your answer to question 5 is (a), is it because?

- a) The rise in living costs
- b) Them being away from the family
- c) Their wives influence
- d) Lack of concern about social norms
- e) Others (specify) _____

7. This question to be answered by wives who have completed their childbearing period. If you could go back to the beginning of your married life, would you like to have:

- a) More children than you currently have
- b) Less children than you currently have
- c) The same
- d) Do not know

8. Below you will find a number of statements. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each using scale ranging 1-4 with 1 being "strongly agree" and 4 "strongly disagree".

| STATEMENT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) A man lives through his children | | | | |
| b) The real death occurs when a father dies without having sons | | | | |
| c) Having more children in a family makes the wife more secure | | | | |
| d) Having many children strengthens a couples relationship | | | | |
| e) Male children provide more support to their parents than females | | | | |

f) The cost of children incurred on the part of the family is less than the benefit they bring _____

g) Frequent pregnancies have negative effects on wife's health _____

h) Having many children prevents a man from marrying another wife _____

i) Religion prohibits the limiting number of children a family should have _____

Decision making

1. Who decides the size of your family?
   - a) Husband
   - b) Wife
   - c) Husband and wife together
   - d) Your husbands parents
   - e) Others (specify) _____

2. Do you or did you have any plan about the size of family you should have?
   - a) Yes - b) No

3. If the answer is yes, when is/was that?
   - a) At the beginning of married life
   - b) After having the first child
   - c) After having a number of children
   - d) After the children became a burder to the family
   - e) All the time

4. If you are using or would like to use contraceptives, what is the response of your husband to such practice?
   - a) Agreement
   - b) Disagreement
   - c) Indifferent
   - d) The decision is solely your own

<u>Fertility attitudes and desired number and gender of children</u>

1. How long have you been married? _____ years.
2. How many children have you had, including those who have died?

   a) Male _____ b) Female _____ c) Total _____
3. How many living children do you have?

   a) Male _____ b) Female _____ c) Total _____
4. How many children are currently living with you?

   a) Male _____ b) Female _____ c) Total _____
5. How many of your own children are living away from the home?

   a) Male _____ b) Female _____ c) Total _____
6. Below you will find a number of statements. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each using a scale ranging from 1 to 4, with 1 being "strongly agree" and 4 being "strongly disagree".

| STATEMENT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Childbearing is the wife's main function | | | | |
| b) Women should have as many children as they can | | | | |

c) The quality of children is better than the quantity _____

d) Limiting family size helps solve many family problems _____

e) The luckiest families are those with more male children _____

f) Under occupation, females cause more concern to their parents _____

g) Female employment outside their home is in contradiction to society's values and norms _____

h) The family with female children is regarded as barren _____

6. Do you prefer to have more male children than females.

- a) Yes - b) No

7. If the answer is yes, why?

- a) Because sons carry the family name while daughters carry the name of their husband's family.
- b) Because sons help the family more.
- c) Because male children inherit family property.
- d) Because of the family's obsession with their daughters and their reputation after their marriage.
- e) Unmarried daughters constitute a threat to their parents.

- f) Family reputation could be more at risk with female children.
- g) Others (specify) _____

8. Do you or did you prefer the first child to be male?
   - a) Yes
   - b) No
9. What is the minimum level of education you would accept for your daughter?
   - a) Preparatory
   - b) Secondary
   - c) College
   - d) University
   - e) Higher education
10. What is the minimum level of education you would accept for your son?
   - a) Preparatory
   - b) Secondary
   - c) College
   - d) University
   - e) Higher education
11. If a family had more female than male children, how would you advise them?
   - a) Continue childbearing
   - b) Accept the situation as it is
   - c) No difference between males and females
12. How many children would you or did you prefer to have during your lifetime?

   a) Male _____ b) Female _____ c) Total _____

13. Do you think that your husband prefers to have?

- a) More children than you desire
- b) The same number of children
- c) Less than you desire

14. Would you like to have another child?

- a) Yes - b) No

15. If yes, how soon after the last baby? _____ years.

16. What gender would you like your baby to be? _____

17. Did you want the last baby you had? (if applicable)

- a) Yes - b) No

18. If the answer is no, is it because?

- a) You have enough children
- b) Economic reasons
- c) Health reasons
- d) Social reasons
- e) The need to concentrate on the welfare of present children
- f) Others (specify) _____

19. If and when you have a daughter reaching marriagable age, would you prefer her to have:

- a) Less children than you desire
- b) More children than you desire
- c) The same number of children
- d) Up to her to decide

20. If and when you have a son reaching marriagable age, would you prefer him to have:

- a) Less children that you desire
- b) More children than you desire
- c) The same number of children
- d) Up to him to decide

Contraceptive methods

1. Who decides the use of contraceptives in the family (if applicable)?
   - a) Your husband
   - b) You yourself
   - c) You and your husband
   - d) The doctor
   - e) Others (specify) _____

2. Are you in favour of family size determination?
   - a) Yes
   - b) No

3. If yes, is it because of:
   - a) Economic reasons
   - b) Health reasons
   - c) Lack of accommodation
   - d) Reasons related to parents own ambitions
   - e) Having enough children (achieving desire)
   - f) Others (specify) _____

4. Adding to question 3, what is the main purpose for your family size determination?
   - a) Increase the birth interval
   - b) Stop having children

5. What type of contraceptives did you use, or are using, if any? _____

6. Are you currently using contraceptives?

- a) Yes - b) No

7. When did you start using contraceptives (if applicable)?

- a) After having the first child
- b) After reaching the desired number of children
- c) Before achieving the desired number of children
- d) After exceeding the desired number of children

8. To be answered by those who used to use, or are using, contraceptives. Did you face any difficulty in using such a method?

- a) Yes - b) No

9. If yes, from whom? (Give relation, not name)

_____

10. Did you face any health difficulty when you used contraceptives (if applicable)?

- a) Yes - b) No

11. If you are planning to use contraceptives, do you expect opposition from?

- a) Husband
- b) Husband's family
- c) Your parents
- d) Do not expect any opposition
- e) Others (specify) _____

12. If you are not using and do not plan to use contraceptives, is it because of?

- a) Religious reasons
- b) Their adverse side effect
- c) Being expensive
- d) Husbands opposition
- e) You want to have as many children as possible
- f) Others (specify) _____